The Fifth Wall

by Black_Tea_and_Bones

Summary

Kara goes to bed with Mon-El, and wakes up with Lena Luthor.

But it isn't Kara’s bed, and they’re not in Lena’s apartment, and that is definitely not their baby... Right?

Notes

This is an idea I couldn't get out of my head... so I'm going to try my hand at keeping up with two WIP's at once... This story is much more light-hearted and less plot-heavy than "Journey" though, so I think it'll be a relief to be able to switch between them.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Waking up...

Kara wasn’t used to waking up with company.

She was used to waking up alone. She’d been waking up alone for most of her adult life. So waking up naked and curled loosely around someone else who was also naked, with their limbs intertwined and soft skin under her cheek, blankets forgotten at the foot of the bed, and the early morning sun shining warmly across her back was a fairly new experience all by itself.

Given the novelty, perhaps she could be forgiven for not noticing immediately that something was... well... different.

Grumbling against the light trying to pry her eyes open, Kara snuggled closer, burying her face in long dark hair. The body underneath her shifted, and Kara protested by tightening her grip; winding her arms more firmly around a slim waist, and trapping the soft curve of rounded hips under her thigh.

“Five more minutes,” she mumbled against warm skin.

“Hmm...” her companion hummed sleepily in response, long, delicate fingers tracing lightly over the backs of Kara’s hands.

Still, Kara didn’t quite get it. Not until she gave in, stretching languidly and pushing herself up on her hands to grin goofily down at...

“Lena!?” Kara squeaked, scrambling back off of the other woman and tugging hastily at the sheets trapped beneath them in an attempt to cover herself.

“Kara?” Lena looked equally confused, if not quite so panic stricken. She sat up, rubbing at her eyes and seemingly unconcerned with her nudity. “What are you doing in my bed?”

“Me?” Kara demanded, finally succeeding in pulling the sheets up to her chest. “What are you doing in my bed?”

Lena blinked, looking around. “Oh.” She frowned. “This isn’t my apartment.”

“No, it’s my...” Kara broke off, following Lena’s gaze around the room. “Wait, this isn’t my apartment either...”

Lena pulled her knees up to her chest, draping her arms across them in a token attempt at modesty, though she appeared more annoyed than embarrassed. “Then whose is it?”

A valid question.

One Kara had no idea how to answer.

“Umm...”

Any attempt they might have made find a plausible explanation was interrupted by a long, loud wail that broke the silence of the unfamiliar apartment.

“Mommy! Mooommmmeeeeey!”

Kara winced, the high-pitched shriek cutting sharply through her super hearing. Lena’s eyes
widened, and for a moment they just stared at each other, neither one of them sure exactly what the protocol was for waking up in a stranger’s bed, in a stranger’s apartment... and dealing with what was, presumably, that same stranger’s very loud, very unhappy, baby.

“I guess I’ll just...” Kara gestured towards the door when the crying showed no signs of stopping, and Lena nodded.

“I’ll see if I can find us some clothes, and figure out where we are,” she offered.

“Good... that’s...Yes,” Kara said, completely failing to string basic words together as she slid off the bed and wrapped the sheet awkwardly around herself. It figured, that even in the midst of what had to be one of the weirder experiences of her life, Lena was still about ten times more poised than she could ever hope to be.

Outside the room there was a short hallway. To Kara’s left, it led to what looked like an open concept living room and kitchen, and directly across from her there was another door, behind which the crying had subsided into little hiccupping sobs. There didn’t seem to be anyone else in the apartment, which Kara confirmed with a quick sweep of her x-ray vision. They were alone.

Well, except for the baby.

Kara pushed the door open cautiously, not wanting to startle the kid into further hysterics. She needn’t have worried. As soon as the baby saw her, the sniffling stopped and the little girl pushed herself up on her toes, arms stretching out over the top rail of her crib towards Kara.

“Mama!” She squealed, her big blue eyes brightening with recognition. “Up!”

“Oh, Rao...” Kara whispered. This was... she had no idea what this was. Whatever weird alternate reality they had woken up in, this kid couldn’t be... right? It wasn’t possible. But there was no doubt or hesitation in those chubby little hands reaching for her, and the eyes...Kara knew those eyes, she’d seen them in the mirror often enough. The hair was wrong, though; curly, like Kara’s, but dark. She looked a little bit like Kal El as a baby actually, though clearly more toddler than baby now that Kara had gotten a good look at her, and there was something very familiar about the set of her chin when she pushed her lower lip out in a pout, obviously annoyed that Kara was still halfway across the room.

“UP!” She demanded imperiously.

What else could Kara do?

She picked her up.

“Hey kiddo,” she said, balancing the little girl on her hip with one arm, and holding up her sheet with the other. “I don’t know about you, but I’m a little confused right now. We’re gonna figure it out though, don’t worry...”

She looked around the room, hoping for clues. It was clearly a nursery, what with the crib, rocking chair, changing table and matching shelves filled to capacity with toys and books. Whoever this child was, this was her home; she wasn’t just visiting. The walls were painted white with a powder blue border design that looked like it had been hand-stenciled, and the room had been decorated to match, all white and blue with silver accents. Kara very carefully didn’t examine the border too closely. The design absolutely did not look like stylized Kryptonian script. Nope.

Though speaking of script... there were letters hanging above the crib; white on white in a simple, elegant font. Someone around here had a very definite aesthetic.
“Lizzy...” Kara tried it out, and decided she liked it. “I guess you have a name, kid.”

“And a family,” Lena added from behind her, nearly startling Kara into dropping her sheet.

Kara caught it just in time, but almost lost Lizzy instead when the little girl attempted to launch herself towards Lena, who, of course, was already dressed in a black t-shirt and jeans that fit perfectly in a way that something borrowed shouldn’t have.

“Really...?” Kara asked, trying desperately to juggle both child and modesty. “I mean, where are they?”

“Right here,” Lena said, holding up a framed portrait for Kara to see. “I found this in the living room.”

It was... *them*? In the photograph, Lena had her arms wrapped around Kara and she was pressing a kiss to her cheek. Kara was laughing, nose scrunched up under her glasses, and holding a child who was clearly Lizzy in adorable little blue jeans and a Supergirl t-shirt. Silver script at the bottom of the frame read “Luthor-Danvers Family – 2017”

“Wow...” Lena raised a perfectly manicured brow. “I don’t suppose you have an explanation for this?”

Kara shook her head. “I really, really wish I did... Here,” she said, angling the squirming little girl towards Lena. “Can you take her for a minute so I can get dressed?”

Lizzy was clearly on board with this plan, making grabby hands for Lena. “Mommy!” she shouted, her little feet bracing against Kara’s hip in an effort to push herself free. “Mommy, up ‘Izzy!”

Lena looked... well if Kara could only choose one word to describe her right now, that word would be *terrified*. She was always pale, but Kara could swear her skin had gone a few shades whiter than usual, and she didn’t quite put her hands behind her back, but she clearly wanted to, long fingers twisting in the hem of her t-shirt. “Can’t you just... put her back in her crib? Or on the floor?”

“She wants you,” Kara pointed out.

“I...” Lena let go of her shirt and lifted her hands slightly, eyeing Lizzy as if she was some kind of exotic animal with an as yet undetermined temperament. “Kara, I can’t... I don’t know anything about children...what if I drop her?”

“Lena, come on! I’m going to drop her in a minute.”

“Okay, fine!” Lena glared at Kara, but she stepped forward, reaching out for Lizzy. Taking her awkwardly, she held the girl up at arm’s length, clearly not lying about her inexperience. Lizzy however, seemed thrilled with the transfer, Giggling at Lena, she swung her legs and clapped her hands.

“’Izzy fy!” she said, reaching up in a not inaccurate imitation of Kara’s take-off pose.

“I sincerely hope not,” Lena said with a sideways glance at Kara that she was absolutely *not* up to trying to interpret right now.

“I’m going to... clothes....” Kara gestured towards the bedroom. “Is there...?”

“The dresser on the right,” Lena said. “And if I know anything about your style, the right half of the
“Right...” because they were sharing a room. This was a reality in which she and Lena Luthor slept in the same room... in the same bed... and apparently they had a daughter. Lena might be playing this extremely cool, well, aside from her apparent fear of children anyway, but Kara was...not.

Back in the bedroom, she closed the door behind her and leaned back against it, taking a few deep, steadying breaths. Everything was going to be okay. She was going to get dressed, and then they were going to figure out what was going on. She just... wasn’t going to think about it until then.

At least Lena was right about the closet.

Kara picked out a collared shirt and dark blue sweater that could have come off of her rack at home, and added a pair of khaki slacks. There were under things and socks in the dresser, and her glasses were on the bedside table. She slipped into the on suite bathroom to wash her face and fix her hair, pulling it back into its customary ponytail with one of the many elastics she found in a drawer. A quick search revealed that all of her hair and skin products were the same, not that she had many. There were far more on Lena’s side of the vanity.

Dressed and feeling a great deal more like herself, Kara made her way back out into the hallway, but a quick glance revealed that Lena and Lizzy were no longer in the nursery. She followed the sound of voices to the living room, where Lizzy was sitting on the floor on a blanket surrounded by piles of books and toys. She had a fluffy, white stuffed dog with a little red cape fastened around its neck in one hand, with which she was having an actively one-sided and largely incomprehensible conversation, and a half-eaten cookie in the other.

Lena was only a few steps away in the kitchen, just pouring a second cup of coffee.

“I swear she wanted down,” she said defensively when she saw Kara. “I’m watching her, and the box of cookies had a baby on it.”

“It’s fine,” Kara reassured her, reaching out to take the offered cup of coffee. She was usually a tea person, but extreme times... “You’re taking this all pretty well actually...”

Lena leaned back against the counter, sipping from her own cup. Her hair was down, tucked neatly behind her ears, and the jeans and t shirt were easily the most casual clothing Kara had ever seen her in. She looked different like this, softer, but more real, less the CEO of L Corp, and more Lena.

“I’m absolutely terrified,” she admitted. “But I’m not unfamiliar with, let’s say... unusual situations. Whether this is some kind of elaborate prank, or something more... foreign. I’m confidant you and I can find a solution. Besides,” She smirked up at Kara. “If I had to wake up married to someone, I’m glad it was you.”

Kara blushed. “Um... married?” she squeaked.

Lena held up the hand that wasn’t wrapped around her coffee. Sure enough, there were two rings on her left ring finger, both silver, one with a respectable diamond, and the other a simple band. “Looks like you’re the one who proposed,” she teased, reaching out to raise Kara’s hand, where there was a matching silver band, but no engagement ring.

The blush intensified, and Kara reclaimed her hand to cover her face. “I cannot believe this...” She muttered.

“Dissapointed?” Lena asked, archly.
“Oh, no!” Kara dropped her hand. “I mean... who could be disappointed with you... you’re... you. But I’m not... At least I don’t think...” She stammered, flustered when Lena just laughed.

“I’m teasing, Kara.” She winked, and took another sip of her coffee before sobering. “But seriously, what’s our next step here? You’re the one with the friends in high places, literally. What do we do?”

“Well...” Kara sat down on the couch, her eyes unconsciously seeking out Lizzy, playing contentedly on the floor. “I think we need to go talk to my sister.”
Kara is unprepared for motherhood, Lena is no help, Lizzy hates socks and Bill the Security Guard is the nicest guy ever.

Chapter Notes

Thanks to everyone who left comments and kudos on chapter one!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It wasn’t quite that easy of course.

Kara had no idea how she was going to tell Alex she’d woken up married to Lena Luthor of all people, with a shiny silver ring and a daughter to prove it. She didn’t even want to attempt it over the phone. Even if Alex believed her right away, she was going to want an explanation Kara simply didn’t have. It would be much easier just to show her.

That is, assuming this reality shift was limited to the three of them and this apartment, and they hadn’t somehow been transported to a different Earth where Kara really was married to Lena Luthor and they really did have a daughter...

No.

If that was true, it would mean that while this might be only one of nearly infinite possibilities, it was still technically possible, and Lena didn’t....Kara certainly didn’t... A Luthor and a Super working together had to already be defying the odds beyond credibility, so this? It couldn’t be real.

Right?

Right.

Either way, a trip to the DEO was in order.

Lena volunteered to make breakfast, leaving Kara to deal with the kid.

She still seemed reluctant to even touch her, which was a small problem, because while the changing and diapering process went smoothly enough, Kara really could have used an extra set of hands to convince Lizzy that wearing clothes wasn’t optional. It wasn’t so much that she resisted as that she wriggled, and Kara wasn’t used to handling human kids. She didn’t want to drop her, but she also didn’t want to hurt her by holding on too hard.

Lizzy thought all of this was hilarious of course.

Oh, and she hated socks, apparently.
Hated them.

The first sock went on fine, but as soon as Kara tried to put the second one on, the first was off again. Off, and thrown across the room with extreme prejudice and a familiar pout that made Kara want to apologize to anyone who had ever tried to say no to her. That thing was lethal.

After the fifth attempt, Kara made the executive decision that socks weren’t really all that important anyway. She tucked a pair into the expensive-looking diaper bag she’d found under the change table just in case. She would have socks, and if anyone wanted to judge her for leaving her kid in bare feet, they were welcome to try their luck at putting them on.

As soon as Lizzy was released, she bolted for the hallway, and Kara had to scramble to catch up. For a toddler, she was surprisingly fast. Not super fast, which Kara had been slightly worried about, but still, she could really move. She careened her way through the living room, apparently having spent more time working on speed than steering, and crashed straight into Lena’s legs.

“Mommy!” Lizzy wrapped both arms around Lena’s knees and beamed up at her. “No sucks!”

Lena froze. Kara didn’t think she’d ever seen her brought so completely to a standstill, either literally or figuratively. A plate of toast in one hand, a little orange sippy cup in the other, and no flat surface in reach, she looked down helplessly at the grinning toddler.

“Need some help there?” Kara offered.

“Please.” Lena handed over the plate and cup.

Kara set the food down on the table before tugging Lizzy free and depositing her into her booster seat.

“Thanks, I know this isn’t exactly...” Kara’s gesture took in Lizzy, the simple breakfast, and the fact that the toddler was currently getting more jam on her face and hands than in her mouth. “You.”

Lena shrugged. “Well, I may not have much experience with children, but toast and juice are well within my capabilities. Though I have to ask... What are sucks, and why aren’t we having any of them?”

Kara took a minute to catch up. “Oh, socks.” She snorted. “She refused to wear any.”

“Stubborn,” Lena noted with a smirk. “I wonder who she gets that from?”

Kara rolled her eyes. “Right, because you’re known for being so cooperative.”

The smirk widened. “That depends entirely on who you ask. For example, I almost never say no to a certain reporter. Everyone else on the other hand... let’s just say I know how to pick my battles.”

Kara was blushing again, she knew she was, but she was hoping Lena hadn’t noticed. “And I don’t?”

Lena raised a brow, her expression answer enough on both counts. “You pick far too many.”

Huh...

Kara might have been tempted to follow up on that little observation, but Lizzy chose that moment to throw her empty plate on the floor, which effectively ended the conversation. Thankfully Lena had had the sense to use a plastic plate, so it was only crumbs to sweep up, but given the enthusiasm
Lizzy had leaned to her breakfast, a wet wash cloth and a clean shirt were also in order.

Lena got the broom, Kara got the wash cloth, and Lizzy got Jam **everywhere** in her protest against the indignity of being wiped clean, and then she and Kara **both** got new shirts.

A quick search turned up their cell phones, a purse for Lena and a wallet for Kara, and two sets of keys. Kara grabbed the diaper bag, swinging it over her shoulder, and they were ready to go.

“So tell me again why we’re going to the FBI with this?” Lena asked as she followed Kara into the elevator, pressing the button for the parking garage. They’d decided against using Lena’s driver until they knew more about what was going on.

“Oh.” Right. In all of the confusion, Kara had forgotten just how little Lena actually knew. She hitched Lizzy a little higher on her hip and decided that was going to have to change. Things were already weird enough, and likely to get even weirder, Lena deserved as much of the truth as Kara could give her. “We’re not?”

“But you said we should talk to your sister?”

“Alex... doesn’t exactly work for the FBI,” Kara explained. “She works for the DEO.”

“DEO?”

“Department of Extranormal Operations. It’s kind of a secret government agency, they handle stuff like this.”

“Oh.” Lena looked thoughtful, but not particularly surprised. “So this isn’t unusual then? People waking up on the wrong side of reality?”

“It’s very unusual,” Kara said, feelingly. “But unusual is kind of their thing, so it makes it **seem** usual, if that makes any sense.”

Lena nodded. “Familiarity takes the *extra* out of extranormal. I get it; I’ve had my fair share of ‘extra’ myself. So we see your sister, and then what?”

“Hopefully she and the rest of the DEO can figure out what’s going on.”

“Are we sure they’ll believe us?” Lena echoed Kara’s earlier fears. “What if we’re the only ones who think anything’s changed?”

Kara chose not to share her reasoning on that front... That would be just... no. “Alex will know what to do,” she said firmly, hoping it was true. “Once we know what happened, we can fix it and then both of us can get back to our lives.”

The elevator doors slid open as they reached the garage, and Kara stepped out, turning when Lena didn’t immediately follow.

“Coming?” Kara asked, unconsciously gentling her tone. There was something about the way Lena was looking at her... but she blinked and it was gone.

“Of course,” Lena said, brushing off her hesitation and joining Kara. They scanned the garage full of cars doubtfully. “This could be interesting...”

There had been a key and a fob on Lena’s key ring, both sporting a shiny silver L, and Kara’s suspicions were born out when an experimental press of the ‘unlock,’ ‘button revealed a matching
silver Lexus parked only a few spaces from the elevators.

“Really?” Kara teased. “Isn’t that a little...”

“I’ll have you know, the GS is considered a family car,” Lena pointed out, haughtily.

“Right...” Kara let that one go. After all, it wasn’t like Lena had picked it out.

She put Lizzy in the back, relieved to find there was already a car seat installed because neither of them had thought to look for one upstairs. She handed the kid a second cookie to keep her still while she got her buckled in. The straps and snaps were fairly self-explanatory, and it only took a minute to figure them out. Lizzy tested everything with an experimental wriggle when she was done, sitting back into the seat with a resigned huff. Confinement was apparently one of the long accepted trials of her life.

Kara threw the diaper bag in on the seat beside her, shut the door, and joined Lena in the front, sliding into the passenger side and buckling herself in.

“Where to?” Lena asked, starting the car.

Kara gave her the address, and Lena entered it into the onboard navigation system. “That’s convenient,” she said when the route came up, indicating their destination was only five minutes away, but she didn’t ask any questions and Kara carefully didn’t volunteer any theories as to why their alternate selves might have chosen to live within such an easy commute of the DEO’s downtown headquarters.

Lena proved to be an excellent driver, if a little heavy on the gas pedal, and they were pulling into the DEO parking lot long before Kara was ready. This was going to be... she had no idea what this was going to be. Would it still be her Alex on the other side of those doors? Or would she be asking some other Supergirl’s sister for help? Or worse, were they even sisters in this world at all? Kara had been afraid to check the contacts in her phone before they left. Their apartment was full of photographs, but only of the three of them. There had been no sign of her extended family...

No, she was being ridiculous. They were the Luthor-Danvers family. She was still Kara Danvers, which meant Eliza and Jeremiah had adopted her and Alex was still her sister. Everything was going to be fine. So long as she had Alex, in any variation, she could handle this.

“Alex will know what to do,” she reminded herself firmly.

“You have a lot of faith in your sister,” Lena observed quietly, parking the car and turning to look at her. “I envy you that.”

“She’s the best,” Kara agreed. “She’s always taken care of me.”

Lena looked away, long fingers tightening on the wheel before sliding free to tangle in her lap. “Lucky,” she said.

Kara wasn’t sure what possessed her, but there was this something about Lena that always... she just wanted to make it all better, somehow. “Hey,” she said, reaching out to take Lena’s left hand and holding it up against her own. “So long as we’re wearing these rings she’s technically your sister too, so consider yourself entitled to full sister-care privileges.”

Lena raised a single, skeptical brow. “And how is Agent Danvers going to feel about having a Luthor in the family?”
“She’ll love you,” Kara assured her, promising herself she would make darn sure of that as soon as she could have a private word with Alex.

Lena snorted, but she linked her fingers with Kara’s and her green eyes were amused instead of sad. “Well, so long as you’re sure. I suppose I could use a few relations I won’t have to testify against in court. Even if they’re only temporary.”

“Good.” Kara attempted to retrieve her hand, but Lena didn’t let her go.

“While we’re on the subject of privileges...” She grinned wickedly. “What sort of spousal benefits should I be expecting?”

And they were back to the blushing.

Kara knew Lena was only teasing her. There was no way she was being serious... but Rao, when Lena was looking at her like that, it was easy to forget she didn’t actually mean it the way it sounded like she meant it. Kara opened her mouth to reply, but nothing came out. Lena’s grin widened, her gaze flicking down before coming back up to Kara’s eyes, and had it always been this hot in here...?

“Mama, out!”

The imperious demands of a toddler who’d had quite enough of being ignored, thank you very much, was more than sufficient to bring Kara back to reality. Lena too, if the annoyed twist to the corner of her mouth was any indication. She dropped Kara’s hand with a poorly concealed sigh, and unbuckled her seatbelt. “Shall we?”

“Ye-Yeah...” Kara adjusted her glasses and took a deep breath. Right. Alex. The DEO. She could do this.

Thankfully, the guard on duty at the front desk was a friend.

“Hey Bill,” she said. “I’m here to see Alex, do you know if she’s in yet?”

“Ms. Danvers!” He beamed. “Your sister just got in about half an hour ago. I’ll let her know you’re on your way up.” He turned to Lena, and Kara braced herself for a barrage of questions, but if anything, his smile just got brighter. “Ms. Luthor, we’re always happy to see you too. Now, I know Agent Schott has some new toy he’s dying to show you.” He lowered his voice in a conspiratorial whisper. “So if you’re in a hurry, I’d avoid the armoury.”

“Thanks for the tip,” Lena mock-whispered back, playing along. She even added a flirty wink.

Bill blushed, and for some reason Kara found it irritating. She shifted Lizzy on her hip. “We should probably go up.”

“Of course, Ms. Danvers.” Bill handed Lena a visitors pass. “Just drop this back on your way out. I know it seems silly, since we all know you’re with Ms. Danvers here, but we have to follow procedure.”

“No trouble at all,” Lena assured him, clipping the pass to her shirt.


“Don’t worry, Miss Lizzy.” Bill reached under his desk. “I didn’t forget you.” He came back up with a third cookie. “Here you go.”
Lizzy promptly stuffed the whole thing in her mouth, grinning through the crumbs. Bill just shook his head.

“You’ve got your Mama’s appetite, kid. That’s for sure.”

“Thanks, Bill,” Kara said weakly. “We’re gonna...” she gestured towards the elevators.

“All right, Ms. Danvers, Ms. Luthor, you all have a good day, now!”

“You too, Bill.”

Lena waited until they’d gotten onto the elevator, and the doors were closed before asking the obvious question. “That wasn’t a very good sign, was it?”

“Nope.”

Chapter End Notes

You can also find me at blackteaandbones.tumblr.com

Come by for silly fandom things, fic illustrations (including a sketch of Lizzy!) and general random things that interest me.
Kara forgot something, Lena is having a little too much fun with this, Lizzy is thwarted, J’onn is smug, Alex takes charge, and Winn makes a discovery.

Thank you to everyone who left comments and Kudos for chapter two!

It took about five minutes for things to get even worse.

Kara had just set Lizzy down. She’d only taken her eyes off of her for a second, and she was just gone. She couldn’t believe it; her first day as a mother, and she’d already lost her kid.

“Could someone please tell me why there is a small child running around unattended in my Secret Government Facility?” J’onn somehow managed to convey equal amounts of accusation and disappointment along with a subtle undercurrent of resignation in a single sentance.

Kara was very familiar with that particular ability of his from her early days as Supergirl.

“Ummm...” She pushed her way through the unusually thick crowd on the DEO’s main floor to find J’onn dragging a belligerent Lizzy out of his office by the hand. She winced at the size of their audience, nearby agents doing their best to look busy and not at all like they were eavesdropping and trying really, really hard not to laugh. “I can explain?”

J’onn looked even more annoyed than he sounded. “Miss. Danvers...”

Kara winced. Oohh... last names were never a good sign.

“I take it that you are responsible for this?”

Lizzy took advantage of J’onn’s shift in attention to yank her hand free. She glared up at him, arms crossed over her round toddler belly, and blue eyes snapping with impotent rage. When he just frowned at her, she stomped a bare foot, her small vocabulary seemingly insufficient for the depth of her wrath.

“Sort of?” Kara tried to pick Lizzy up, but it was like trying to lift an armful of angry Jello. Angry Jello that shrieked as if it was being murdered.

“How can you be sort of responsible for a child?” J’onn demanded, raising his voice over the noise.

“It’s complicated...” Kara finally managed to get a grip on the kid, at which point Lizzy gave up mid-yell, collapsing limply in Kara’s arms as a last dramatic protest.

“I see.” J’onn left off his disapproving scowl to look past her, eyebrows raised. “Speaking of
“strays...” he muttered under his breath. “Miss Luthor, what brings you to the DEO?”

Kara half-turned, shifting Lizzy to rest more comfortably against her shoulder, glad to see that she hadn’t lost Lena too.

“That’s part of the complicated, I’m afraid.” Lena confessed, joining Kara with a light touch to the small of her back, her fingers warm even through two layers of clothing. “Though I have to say, I’m relieved you need an explanation.”

“Explanation for what?” Alex cut in, her timely arrival sending most of their audience scattering.

“Alex!” Kara had literally never been so happy to see anyone in her life. “It’s a long story, but could we maybe...” she glanced around at the remaining oh so casually not eavesdropping co-workers, “talk somewhere more private?”

“We can use my office,” J’onn offered. “So long as you keep this one,” He levelled his brows at the toddler still playing possum. “Out of my cookies.”

Lizzy opened one eye. “Cookah?” she asked hopefully.

Kara sighed. “No more cookies!”

“You do have to admire her single-minded pursuit of a goal,” Lena admitted, shaking her head. “Shall we?”

Alex nodded, she and J’onn leading the way back to J’onn’s office. J’onn held the office door open for them, waving them towards a set of chairs in front of his desk. “Have a seat.”

Kara and Lena sat; Lena gracefully, crossing her legs and folding her hands neatly on her knee, looking every inch the professional CEO in a business meeting, for all that she was in jeans instead of a skirt, and Kara more collapsing than sitting, unused to juggling a second person. Lizzy instantly started wriggling in her lap. “’Izzy, down!”

“Lizzy up,” Kara retorted. “Here...” She fished the stuffed dog out of the diaper bag and handed it to her. Lizzy reluctantly subsided, leaning back against Kara’s chest and hugging the dog around its neck. She glared at J’onn through fluffy white fur as he sat down in his own chair on the other side of the desk and moved the small plate of cookies that Kara assumed had been their original bone of contention, away from the edge. Staring back at her, he very deliberately picked one up and took a bite.

Lizzy grumbled.

Alex stayed on her feet, arms crossed, and her gaze moving suspiciously between Kara and Lena. “Since Kara brought you here, Miss Luthor,” she said finally. “I’m guessing you’re involved in this somehow?”

Lena held up her left hand, showing off her rings. “Biblically, as it turns out. And please, call me Lena. If we’re going to be sisters, we really should be on a first name basis.”

Alex’s jaw dropped.

J’onn choked on his cookie.

Kara hid her face in her hands. “Lena!” she whined.
“What?” Lena was all innocence.

“Oh, back up.” Alex sounded a little strangled, but she rallied quickly. “Can we start from the beginning? Kara, who is this kid? And when exactly did you get married?”

Kara peeked through her fingers. “You really don’t know?”

Alex and J’onn both shook their heads and Kara dropped her hands with a sigh of relief. Whatever was messing with reality, it hadn’t spread to her family yet.

“So…” she started awkwardly, resisting the urge to fidget with her glasses. “Remember how you’ve kind of always wanted to be an Aunt?”

Alex’s eyes widened, and then narrowed. “That’s not funny.”

“You have no idea how much I wish it was a joke.”

Alex looked dubious. “You’re serious?”

Kara nodded.

“How did this happen?”

“I have no idea… Lena and I woke up together this morning, and she was just… there, in the apartment, and there was all this baby stuff, and pictures, and-.”

“Wait.” Alex frowned. “You woke up together?”

“Not on purpose!” Kara protested. “I went to bed with-“ She clapped her hands over her mouth. “Oh no…” she gasped. “I forgot all about Mon-El.”

“Mon-El?” three voices questioned simultaneously. Lizzy just made a face.

“Umm… yeah?” Kara squeaked. “We kind of… um…”

J’onn held up a hand. “Please, don’t finish that sentence.”

“Who is Mon-El?” Lena sounded far less amused than she had a minute ago.

“Oh, um… Mike? He invited himself to your fundraiser…”

“I see… And is he your…?”

Kara shook her head. “No! I mean… we haven’t… we didn’t exactly… I don’t really want to talk about it,” she finished lamely. Understatement of the year. If she hadn’t already been pretty sure sleeping with Mon-El was a mistake, completely forgetting about him afterwards, even given their extenuation circumstances, would have been a huge red flag. She winced. “I should probably make sure he’s all right, though.”

“I’ll have someone look into it.” J’onn offered, still looking uncomfortable. “So, you two woke up together. In your apartment or Miss. Luthor’s?”

“Neither,” Lena interjected, explaining the situation far more succinctly than Kara ever could have. She finished with Bill from security. “Whatever, or whoever is responsible for this,” she concluded. “They didn’t just put us into’ bed together. They put us into an entire life together.”
“So why aren’t we affected?” Alex asked J’onn, who shrugged.

“If it were only me, I would say it had something to do with my psychic abilities, but if you’re immune, I think we need to consider other possibilities.”

“It might be a matter of proximity,” Lena offered. “Not physical proximity, obviously,” she amended, “but clearly you’re both familiar with Kara, so if we were to consider a correlation between proximal relationships and reduced suggestibility...”

“...we might have a baseline to start figuring this out from,” Alex finished with a nod of approval. “Only one way to find out...” She leaned over and pressed the call button for the intercom on J’onn’s desk. “Agent Vasquez?”

“Yes Ma’am?”

“Could you come in here for a minute?”

“Right away, Ma’am.”

“This Vasquez,” Lena asked. “How well does she know Kara?”

“Peripherally,” J’onn explained before Kara could open her mouth. “Kara doesn’t officially work for the DEO, but given her relationship with Alex, and her connection to the media, she’s a valuable resource. She’s assisted on a few cases along with Vasquez, enough to give us an idea of how strong this thing is.”

A knock on the door prevented Lena from asking anymore questions, though Kara suspected it was a temporary reprieve. The longer this went on, the harder it was going to get to keep Lena from finding out a lot more about Kara’s involvement with the DEO than Kara was ready to tell her.

“Come in,” J’onn said.

Vasquez stepped in and closed the door behind her. “Agent Danvers? You asked for me?”

“Yes,” Alex said. “Mon-EL didn’t show up for training this morning, could you check the duty roster and see who might be available to go out and bring him in?”

Vasquez was far too professional to make a face, but Kara was pretty sure she wanted to. “Again, Ma’am? That’s the third time this week.” She consulted her tablet. “I can send Agents Ford and Shaw, they’ve been on desk duty since last Monday, they’ll be glad to get out.”

“Good idea,” Alex turned, casually bringing Vasquez’s attention to the family trio. “Kara, you saw him last night, did he say anything about not coming in today?”

“Uh...” Put on the spot, Kara struggled for a believable lie, and settled for the truth. “No?”

“Don’t worry. We’ll find him.” Vasquez made the changes on her tablet, looked up, paused, then glanced between Kara and Lena, furrowing her brow at Lizzy. “Who...”

“’Assez!” Lizzy chirped, waving.

The brief confusion on Vasquez’s face cleared. “Hey there, Lizzy!” She grinned. “Visiting the DEO with your Moms today? Don’t let J’onn catch you in his cookies again!”

“No, cookah...” Lizzy heaved an exaggerated sigh, pushing her lower lip out in a pout.
Vasquez chuckled. “You keep an eye on this one, Ms Danvers, Ms. Luthor.” She tucked her tablet under her arm “Anything else, Agent Danvers?”

“No, that’s all. Thank you, Agent Vasquez.”

With a last grin and a wave for Lizzy, Vasquez took her leave.

Kara sat back with a sigh. “That answers that question. Now what?”

“Now we figure out exactly how much of a mess we’re dealing with.” Alex said. “Lena, would you be willing to work with one of our agents to hack into government records, see if you can find a paper trail? Marriage license, birth certificate, and anything else you can think of that might have been altered?”

Lena nodded. “I’ll let my assistant know I’ll be in late today.”

“You think Agent Schott will be immune?” J’onn asked.

Alex nodded. “If Vasquez was confused for even a moment, Winn should be fine. Kara, can you bring Lizzy down to my lab? I want to run some tests.”

“Sure.” Kara stood up, slinging her bag over one shoulder and settling Lizzy on her hip.

“I’ll have Miss Luthor and Agent Schott set up in here.” J’onn offered.

“Good.” Alex ushered Kara out the door. “We’ll reconvene in an hour.”

Lizzy was not particularly interested in sitting still for an exam, but Alex gave her a stethoscope and showed her how to use it to listen to her heartbeat and her eyes widened in delighted wonder. She insisted on listening to Kara’s heartbeat next, but she was disappointed when she tried it on her dog.

“Ax, ‘isten,” she said, holding out the end of the stethoscope in one hand and the dog in his little red cape in the other to Alex. “No bump.”

“Sorry kid,” Alex told her, patting the dogs head and prepping a needle to draw a blood sample. “He’s not real. He doesn’t have a heart, just stuffing.”

Lizzy cradled the dog in her lap and pressed the silver diaphragm back to her own chest. “Izzy bump,” she said, her little brow crinkled thoughtfully.

“Well, she’s definitely not human,” Alex said when the needle snapped against Lizzy’s unblemished arm. “We’ll have to wait for the results of the DNA swab to be sure, but you might actually have a daughter...”

“How is that even possible?” Kara picked up the sharp point from the floor and threw it away.

“I have no idea,” Alex admitted. “But we’re going to find out. How are you handling all of this by the way?” she asked, stripping off her gloves. “I mean... waking up with Lena Luthor? I know she’s your friend, but that had to be weird, for both of you.”

“So weird!” Kara boosted herself up on the exam table beside Lizzy, kicking her heels idly. “She handled it better than I did though actually. I was a babbling idiot.”

“That I can believe.” Alex chuckled at Kara’s wounded expression. “But you might be surprised. I
doubt she’s nearly as chill about this as she seems.”

“Maybe...” Kara shrugged, unconvinced. “You’re going to be nice to her though, right? Not all suspicious and judgey? I promised her you’d be cool.”

Alex snorted. “What? You get married, and suddenly I’m not allowed to worry about you anymore?”

“Alex...” Kara frowned, crossing her arms.

“Oh, okay.” Alex held her hands up in surrender. “I’m cool.” She picked up Lizzy’s chart and made another notation. “I feel kind of bad for her, actually. All of this,” she indicated the DEO around them with a swirl of her pen, “is a lot to take in, and you? You’re a handful even without the Super back story.”

“Ha, ha,” Kara deadpanned. “Don’t forget the kid, whatever she is...”

“I might be able to help with that one,” Winn announced from the doorway, fiddling with something that looked like it might have once been a remote control before he had jammed a bunch of wires into one end and welded on a few dials and a string of lights.

“What is that?” Alex sounded less than impressed.

“Hey, be nice, it’s just a prototype okay? Give me one minute...” Winn finished his adjustments and pointed the thing at Lizzy, who looked even less impressed than Alex until it whirred to life and lit up with a triumphant little beep, the lights blinking excitedly. “Yes!” Winn crowed. “We have a winner!”

Kara caught Lizzy around the middle when she made a two handed grab for the little device and nearly toppled off the exam table. “What’s the prize?”

“Uh... you two admitting I’m a genius?”

Alex rolled her eyes. “Absolutely, right after you tell us what that thing just did.”

“Oh, right. So, remember when J’onn had me looking at all of those old artifacts from the DEO’s storage vaults last week?”

“Yeah, you were trying to find something to help me with Mxyptlk,” Kara said. “But it was a dead end.”

“Well...” Winn hedged. “I did find one thing, an amulet, but Mon-El... um... borrowed it before I could finish my report, and I never got it back. I got some really interesting initial energy readings though. It had a distinctive signature, like nothing I’ve ever seen before, almost as if it wasn’t quite all the way here, if you know what I mean.”

“Just spit it out Winn,” Alex said. “What does this have to do with the kid?”

“I can’t be sure.” Winn admitted. “But if these readings are right, she might not be the only one we have to worry about. I think someone might have sent her here...”

Kara was getting a bad feeling about this. “Sent her from where?”

“The fifth dimension.”
Finding Out

Chapter Summary

Kara considers the future, Lena is reminded of the past, and Lizzy meets her nemesis.

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone for the comments and kudos on chapter 3!

This chapter is pretty info-heavy, and there will be an obligatory appearance of Mon El, but don't worry, no one is very happy to see him. ;) Chapter 5 will be from Lena's perspective, so you'll get to see her take on all of this.

Enjoy!

The fifth dimension...

That took a little while to sink in. Even after Alex had finished the exam and they’d all relocated to one of the larger conference rooms to share everything they’d learned and plan their next step, Kara still wasn’t quite sure how she felt about it.

Given her recent encounter with Mxyzptlk, he probably should have been the obvious suspect, or at least high on the list of possibilities, but somehow she hadn’t even considered him. Black Mercies, mind controlling aliens, alternate Earths... those had been her first thoughts, and they would have been difficult and dangerous enough, but this? This was terrifying and messy, because it wasn’t a dream, or an illusion, or some other Kara on some other Earth’s problem, it was her life, her reality. Whatever happened here, it was real.

Lena was real. Their marriage might not be, but how many people already believed it was?

Lizzy was real, or at least... she seemed real enough, and she was half Kryptonian; Alex’s DNA tests had confirmed it. Wherever she had come from, Lizzy was Kara and Lena’s biological daughter.

However that was supposed to have happened.

Kara wasn’t even sure if she wanted children. She’d never really thought of it as an option. Her entire species had been reduced to herself and her cousin and it had seemed too much to hope that Human and Kryptonian DNA would be compatible. She’d never even asked, almost afraid of the answer... but what if it was?

Lizzy might be a child-shaped prop in an inter-dimensional Imp’s twisted version of pulling Kara’s pigtails, and she would probably disappear as soon as they sent him on his way again, but what if there could be others?

Krypton might have a future after all.
“Hey, Earth to Kara...” Alex gave the back of her chair a little shake.

“What?” Kara blinked, startled out of her reverie. “Oh, sorry. I spaced out there for a minute.”

Alex sat down beside her, brows furrowed in concern. “Are you okay?” “I think Winn is about to get started...”

“I’m fine,” Kara assured her, summoning up a smile. “Really. Just... lots to think about.”

“We’ll figure it out.”

“I know.”

“Did I miss anything?” Lena took the seat on the other side of Kara, sliding her phone back into her purse and hanging it over the back of her chair. She’d stepped out to make a business call and check in with her secretary while Winn was setting up his presentation.

“Nope,” Winn answered for her as he finished syncing up his laptop to the three large screens hanging on the wall over his head. “Just getting started.”

J’onn was already sitting in the middle of the table, arms crossed and wearing his most inscrutable expression, but the extra large hot chocolate in front of him suggested he was feeling the need for sugary fortification.

Lizzy was down on the carpet playing with a pile of cardboard boxes Winn had found in storage for her. She had spent the first five minutes climbing in and out of the bigger ones, tripping over the edges and falling more than once, but always getting back up and trying again. The smaller boxes went on her head, over her little stuffed dog, and into the bigger boxes. Once she was tired of that, she made careful stacks, placing each box very deliberately before adding the next one, only to knock them all down again with a roar and a squeal of glee.

Alex had succeeded where Kara had failed, and the kid was finally wearing socks and a pair of blue sneakers, though Kara had caught her trying to take them off more than once; her chubby toddler fingers tugging clumsily at the little Velcro straps.

“Okay...” Winn hit a button and the lights dimmed as the screens lit up.

“Is everything all right at the office?” Kara whispered, leaning a little closer. She knew Lena must be eager to get back to work. Lcorp wouldn’t run itself, and getting caught up in unexpected, extranormal shenanigans couldn’t have been high up on her to do list today. The DEO was Kara’s safe space, these were her people, and so long as they had her back she knew everything was going to work out, but Lena didn’t have that.

“It will be,” Lena said, her voice hushed to match Kara’s. “I had to move a few meetings around.” She still looked a little out of place in her casual clothes, but even in jeans and a t-shirt there was something so... almost regal, Kara wanted to say, about her; a kind of ingrained nobility to the straightness of her spine and the line of her jaw that commanded respect, if not outright fealty. Cat had had it too, though Cat’s authority had been sharp and pointed, quick to strike, and never quite sheathed, even when she was at ease. Not unlike like her namesake, Lena wasn’t exactly soft, but she wasn’t so obvious about her edges, more tempered, and less inclined to be cruel.

Cat demanded her well-earned respect, and defended it viciously. Lena seemed to simply expect it as a birthright.

“Oh.” Kara adjusted her glasses and then twisted her fingers together on the table. “Sorry, I know
this is kind of a huge mess right now... and if Winn’s right, it’s probably all my fault.”

“Kara, its fine.” Lena untangled Kara’s hands, and prevented further fidgeting by capturing one with hers and winding them together. “If this fifth-dimensional being has some kind of fixation with you, that’s not your fault.” She smirked. “Though I can’t really blame him.”

Kara snorted and bumped her shoulder into Lena’s, grateful for the low lighting that hid her blush. On the subject of real and not real, what was this? Was Lena under some kind of reality-altering effect too? Was Kara? Lena nearly always left her feeling a little flustered... but flustered was kind of Kara’s thing. It didn’t mean anything... right?

“Ahem.” J’onn cleared his throat. “If we could begin?”

Oh, right.

Kara ignored Alex and Winn’s questioning glances, tipping her chin up and hanging onto Lena’s hand. Friends could hold hands. She and Alex held hands all the time. It was totally fine.

“Oh...” Winn clicked something on his laptop, bringing up the first image, a map of National City with red dots scattered around it. “After I realized Lizzy was emitting fifth dimensional energy, I modified our surveillance programs and scanned the city, and I found eight more similar signatures. They’re not radiating as strongly as she is, and there doesn’t seem to be any kind of pattern, but whatever they are, they might tell us more about what’s going on here.”

“Before that, we did some digging. Lena went through the major general news sites for the last three years. So far it looks like we were right, and right now this is a localized reality shift. I hacked into your government records...” he waved a finger at Lena and Kara. “And that’s where things started getting weird.”

The next image was a marriage certificate, dated April 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2014. “I found this, and this...” It was a birth certificate.

Name: Eliza Louise Luthor-Danvers
Date of Birth: June 7\textsuperscript{th}, 2015
Parents: Lena Luthor and Kara Danvers.

Kara heard Lena’s sharp inhale and when she glanced sideways, there was a new stiffness in her shoulders and jaw. She opened her mouth to say something but Lena squeezed her hand and shook her head minutely. Kara shut it again without a word and squeezed back reassuringly.

No one else seemed to notice, and Winn was already moving on.

“We skimmed through some smaller news sites, gossip magazines, and celebrity news, and found these.” He flipped through wedding photos, interviews, minor news articles about Lcorp’s CEO, glamour shots of a pregnant Lena and dozens of baby pictures, some just of Lizzy, others including the entire family.

“I didn’t realize it at first,” Winn continued. “But none of the pictures have anyone else in them. Only you two and the kid, and the dates don’t make any sense. Lena, you didn’t even move to National City until last year, but according to these articles, you guys met over three years ago, dated for a few months, then got married and had a kid. Everything else, Lex Luthor’s crimes, trial and conviction, the renaming of your company, your mother’s trial, and escape, those are all the same. Kara, you were easier, there isn’t a whole lot of media interest in assistants, even Cat Grant’s, but there was that one article about you and the Flash, and it’s the same article I remember reading last
year, except instead of ‘CEO’s assistant rescued by daring new superhero,’ it’s ‘CEO’s wife...’ and there are mentions of you added to the original interviews and articles about Lena and Lcorp.”

He paused to take a breath. “I think... and this is just a theory, but I think that if this really was someone from the fifth dimension, they didn’t actually change a whole lot. It’s more like they cut and pasted their own version of reality into the spaces around ours and then just let it spread. I’ve set up a program to keep track of mentions of you two online, and they’re multiplying exponentially. The more hits these fake articles and pictures get, the more of them pop up, and the more people are talking about you.”

“Can you take them down?” Kara asked.

“Yeah, but I can’t make people forget them or stop talking about it, and if Bill and Vasquez are any example the effect seems to be even stronger in person. We,” he gestured around the table, “are harder to convince, because our memories of you two, and Kara especially, mean we’re more firmly rooted in this reality, but for most people in National city...” he shrugged. “They don’t know what they don’t know, or they don’t know it well enough, so they see an article about this gorgeous queer power couple or a kid that shouldn’t exist and subconsciously they rationalize it, with this fifth dimensional whammy providing a ready-made explanation. I’ll do what I can online, but if we don’t want it to spread even further you’ll have to try not to be seen together.”

Kara thought of Vasquez, of that moment of confusion, and it made sense. She wondered who else in her life might be vulnerable. Not James, surely, but maybe Cat? That would be an interesting conversation. Eliza? How would she feel about having a granddaughter named after her? And Lena? Did she have anyone who would see through the lie?

Speaking of Lena... She looked calm enough at a glance, but if the steadily tightening grip on Kara’s hand was any indication, that composure was only skin deep.

“So how do we remove this... whammy...?” J’onn asked.

“Find whoever is responsible, Mxyzptlk I’m assuming, given his interest in Kara,” Alex suggested, anger clear in the set of her jaw, “and kick his ass back to the fifth dimension. Again.”

“Again?” Lena asked. “You’ve already banished him once?”

“I did... wait,” now Kara was confused, “didn’t Mon EL say the banishment held for ninety days? So how could this be Mxy?”

No one seemed to have an answer for that.

No one at the table, anyway.

“I told you!” Mon El barged in with a bang, slamming the door back on its hinges, and bringing the rank stench of raw sewage in with him. He looked even worse than he smelled. He was filthy, though it looked like he might have made some attempt to wash his hands and face, and his hair was spiked and matted with some unidentifiable brown goo. He was dressed in a mismatched assortment of ill fitting clothes that only made it all worse.

“I told you how dangerous they were,” he continued at a volume that made Lizzy cover her ears, “and you didn’t listen! You should have killed it when you—” he broke off, frowning at the last slide; a magazine article about working moms with a picture of Lena in one of her perfectly tailored skirt suits, smiling at a bashful Kara in a blue sundress. Lizzy was in her arms, dressed in a miniature version of Kara’s outfit with little buckle shoes, and Kara had an arm around her waist.
There was really no way to misinterpret that.

Mon El’s scowl darkened and Winn hastily snapped lid down on his laptop, flicking the lights back up to full power and throwing an apologetic grimace Kara’s way. She winced and disentangled her hand from Lena’s, not eager to deal with another childish outburst of jealousy right now. However misplaced it might be.

“What do you know?” J’onn demanded, interrupting what was undoubtedly about to be a nasty comment. Never Mon El’s biggest fan, he looked even less impressed than usual.

Distracted, Mon El turned his sneer on J’onn instead of Kara and Lena. “I know that I woke up naked in a pile of garbage this morning. Stranded at the dump, and not in bed with Kara where I should have been.”

The corner of Lena’s lip curled in wordless distaste, not obviously, hardly even enough to notice, but Kara saw it and she wanted to drag Mon El out of there and throw him in the showers until he was ready to stop being so horribly awful and rude, and embarrassing.

“I dug up some clothes,” he went on, obliviously, “and headed here, but your agents found me first, and imagine my surprise when they couldn’t stop gossiping about how cute Kara’s kid was, and how lucky I was that her wife was visiting the DEO today so I probably wouldn’t get written up for missing training again. Then I come up here, to ask you all what the hell is going on... so now I guess I get to say I told you so!”

Okay, Kara really was going to throw him somewhere... maybe out the nearest window, she was halfway out of her chair when Alex stopped her with a hand on her shoulder, and a subtle tilt of her head towards Lena. Oh, right... secret identity.

Alex stood up instead, mouth pressed in a flat line and her eyes snapping. “Unless you have some actual information, the only person you need to be telling anything to is yourself, and the message should be ‘shut up and go take a shower.’”

Mon El glowered, an ugly and stubborn tilt to the set of his jaw, and Kara decided it was time to get involved. In a non-super powered way of course, before someone got hurt.

Probably Mon El.

She was so sick and tired of his attitude, but right now they needed information more than Mon El needed a comeuppance. “Look,” she said, pulling Alex back down. “We’ve all had a really weird morning, and the only thing we know for sure is that the fifth dimension is involved somehow. Mxyzptlk is our most likely suspect, but he shouldn’t be able to cross into our dimension right now, so if you know more...” She held up a hand when he opened his mouth. “And you can be civil, we’ll listen.”

Mon El still looked mutinous, but he sat down at the table between Lena and J’onn. Lena subtly shifted her chair closer to Kara’s.

“Back on Daxam,” he said. “We had a lot of problems with imps like Mxyzptlk, until we stopped trying to banish them and just started killing them instead. After that, they started using conduits, or talismans. Lamps, bottles, rings... any kind of physical object they could imbue with a piece of their power.

“Ooh, like D’jinn, or Genies!” Winn cut in. “That makes sense with what I found in my research for Earth encounters too.”
“Okay, but as far as I know I haven’t rubbed any lamps lately,” Kara protested.

“Yeah, that part is a myth,” Mon El continued. “They don’t exactly need your permission to ruin your life.”

“So where did the idea of three wishes come from?”

“Oh they still grant wishes.” He said with a derisive sneer. “The talismans might be powerful, but they’re not alive, and the imp can’t interfere directly without being in this dimension, so without a wish, nothing happens. But once the wish is made... and you might not even know you’ve made it, thoughts and dreams aren’t much different than words when you can cross dimensions as easily as crossing the street, they’ve got you. They think it’s funny to play with people; give them everything they’ve ever wanted, and then corrupt it or snatch it all away again.

“The only way to stop this bastard is to find his talisman, use it to summon him, and then kill him.

“That seems a little extreme,” Lena said with a hint of ice. “So far this feels more like an elaborate prank than anything truly sinister.”

“I agree.” J’onn leaned forward over the table, steepling his hands together. “But I’m interested in the idea of summoning the culprit to answer for his crimes. If this Mr. Mxyzptlk set all of this in motion, whatever his motivation may be, then he can undo it just as easily. How do we find this talisman?”

Alex glanced at Lizzy, sitting inside one of her boxes with a second one over her head, glaring out at Mon El from under the flaps of cardboard. “Could it be the kid?”

“No, it has to be an inanimate object, something they can channel their power through. Living things don’t work, though I have heard of them using bones or wooden staffs.”

“Those eight power signatures you found,” Alex said to Winn. “Could one of them be the talisman?”

“I guess...” Winn opened his laptop and brought the map of National City back up on the screens. “Though I would expect it to be stronger... is it possible it’s broken?”

“I don’t know,” Mon El admitted, looking unsure for the first time. “I’ve only heard stories... and nothing about a talisman breaking into pieces.”

“Then I suggest we seek out whatever is emitting those signatures.” J’onn said. “If one, or all of them prove to be a link to Mr. Mxyzptlk, we can decide what to do from there.” He sounded unreasonably smug to be back in control of the situation. “Meanwhile, Miss Luthor, I suggest you try to live your life as normally as possible. If Agent Schott is correct, staying away from Miss. Danvers and the child should help to mitigate the effects. This... situation is now under DEO jurisdiction. We’ll keep you updated as necessary.”

Lena raised an eyebrow. “How generous of you... You’re not even going to ask me to sign a non-disclosure agreement?”

J’onn folded his arms, drumming his fingers on the table thoughtfully. “I don’t think that’s necessary. You’ve proven your discretion in the past, and your involvement in this case should be minimal.”

“Really?” The second brow joined the first. “You think being married to Supergirl counts as minimal involvement?”

Kara actually felt her heart miss a beat, And if Alex and Winn’s poleaxed expressions were anything to go by, so did they. J’onn just looked resigned.
“You know Kara is Supergirl,” Alex said flatly, levelling Kara with a look that promised an unpleasant conversation in their future, for all that her words were directed at Lena.

“I didn’t tell her!”

“Was I not supposed to?” Lena asked at the same time. She glanced from Alex to Kara, biting her lip and looking torn between guilt and exasperation. “I’m sorry, Kara. The hair and glasses might work on the general public, but I promise anyone who’s spent more than five minutes with both sides of you has figured it out... You really didn’t know that I knew...?” Lena winced. “Oh. Well, that’s awkward.”

There was a beat of utter silence, and then...

“Miss Luthor,” J’onn said with every evidence of solemnity, though Kara thought she could detect a hint of laughter under his characteristically gruff tone. “Let’s talk about that non disclosure agreement.”
Having it All

Chapter Summary

Lena goes to work, Kara checks up, Lizzy sleeps, Alex is the best big sister and Winn has a suggestion.

Chapter Notes

Here’s chapter 5!

This one is a little longer, since I really wanted to get things moving. :) We're in for a long haul here though... I got the entire outline mapped out and... yeah... we’re gonna be here for a while. Hope that's okay with everyone!

Thanks for all the comments and kudos on Chapter 4! You guys are the best part about posting this. :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was mid afternoon before Lena made it in to Lcorp.

Trust the Department of Extranormal Operations to have, well, extranormally expansive Non-Disclosure Agreements. She really should have had her lawyers look over the paperwork before she signed it, but then she supposed that would have rather defeated the purpose of signing it in the first place.

Still, it was done, and after a quick stop back at the new apartment to change into something a little more professional, Lena could finally close her doors behind her and take a deep, cleansing breath in the undiluted white haven of her office. She had a few minutes before the rescheduled board meeting, and she used them to sweep the room for anything out of the ordinary, but everything was just as she’d left it. There were no baby pictures on her desk, no finger paintings on proud display, no screensaver selfies with Kara, no unusual appointments in her calendar, no sign that she was anything other than what she had been yesterday; The CEO of a multi-billion dollar company, a single workaholic recently estranged from the remains of her lunatic family, with one friend and no social life.

Perfect.

Taking a seat behind her pristine and uncluttered desk, utterly alone for the first time all day, Lena could almost convince herself the entire morning had been dream. Except, of course, for the two silver rings on her finger. She twisted them idly, fingertips lingering on the sharp, sparkling diamond.

Kara had proposed. In this strange, warped reality Lena found herself in, Kara had asked Lena to marry her, and Lena had said yes. She almost wished that was harder to believe. Lena would have liked to have met the man or woman or alien who could have said no. Kara was... Lena stopped that thought before it could go any further, flattening her hands on the top of her desk.
It didn’t matter what Kara was, or, more importantly, who Kara was. She wasn’t Lena’s, no matter what some fifth dimensional busy body had to say about it. That had certainly been made clear today. Even if Mike, or Mon El, or whatever his name was, wasn’t a factor, Lena had been entirely mistaken in her understanding of their relationship. She had thought... but she’d been wrong, and she’d only embarrassed herself. She wasn’t special; she wasn’t part of some select group of super friends Kara had trusted with her identity. Lena had a gift for recognizing when someone was lying to her. People had been lying to her all her life, but she hadn’t thought anyone could lie that badly unless they were doing it on purpose.

She’d been wrong.

“Miss. Luthor?” Jess stuck her head in the door, tone apologetic. “The Board is ready for you.”

“I’ll be right there.” Lena meant to slide the rings off her finger and leave them in her desk. She had no interest in fielding the inevitable questions that would arise when they were noticed, but at the last minute she simply twisted the engagement ring around, so that the diamond was hidden from casual observation. Plain silver bands weren’t likely to excite much comment, and it was possible she wasn’t quite as resigned as she’d like to pretend.

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Two hours in, Lena would have welcomed an interrogation about her sudden change in marital status.

That would have been a vast improvement over passive aggressive insinuations, thinly veiled accusations and, of course, the usual misogynistic condescension and avuncular bullshit. If Lcorp had still been a private company she would have replaced the entire board the moment she took over as CEO. Lex had been the one who wanted to go public, but now the public had lost its faith in the Luthor name, if not the Luthor product, leaving Lena with a board that didn’t respect her, shareholders that didn’t trust her and a city that didn’t want her.

Not, that she didn’t have a few allies.

Two of them; Thomas Crow, and Melanie Rivers, were the only reason any work was getting done today at all. Crow had been a friend of her father’s, and he was shrewd enough to see past her age and gender to the leader Lionel had raised her to be. Rivers had all the empathy and compassion of a shark, but she was smart. She paid attention and she knew how to play the long game. For now, her goals and Lena’s were compatible.

Still, even with them on her side, they were only about halfway through the agenda, and Lena could feel a migraine coming on. She was just about to suggest a five minute break, when her secretary tapped on the door, providing a welcome interruption.

“Ms. Luthor, sorry to interrupt, but Ms. Danvers is here to see you.”

Okay, maybe not so welcome.

Lena looked past Jess to see Kara waving sheepishly through the glass half-wall. The child was fast asleep in her arms, curled up trustingly against her chest with one little fist tangled in her hair. Lena saw several sets of eyebrows rise around the table before she excused herself and hustled Kara out of sight.

“I’m so sorry!” Kara said once they were around a corner. “Jess said you were in a meeting, so I was going to leave a message, but she insisted you’d want to see me, and I didn’t know how to say no to
“Kara, breathe.” Lena interrupted the overflow of apology with a hand on Kara’s wrist. “It’s okay. What did you need?”

“Oh,” Kara shifted the sleeping child in her arms. “I just wanted to make sure you were okay. You kind of rushed out of there once all the paperwork was signed, and we never really got a chance to talk about...” She made a kind of wooshing motion with her free hand. “You know...”

Lena did know, and she also couldn’t help but notice that Kara was still wearing her wedding ring. A completely irrelevant observation, and no reason at all for her chest to suddenly feel tight under her black designer blouse.

“I had a meeting,” she said, dropping her hand and stepping back, “and I already knew, so you don’t have to explain anything. I’m sure you had your reasons for keeping it a secret. I certainly haven’t given you my entire life story. You hardly owe me yours.”

Kara’s face fell. “Right...well, I won’t keep you, I’m sorry for interrupting.”

Lena felt like an ogre. A puppy-kicking ogre. She caught Kara’s sleeve before she could walk away.

“I’m sorry, that was... not your fault.” She gestured back at the boardroom. “It’s them, not you. Honestly, you’ve probably saved me from adding a murder charge to my record today.”

Kara hesitated. “That bad?”

Lena snorted, untangling her fingers from the fabric of Kara’s sweater and curling them around her wrist instead. “If I thought the board was hostile before my mother chose to continue the family tradition of xenophobic lunacy... well, let’s just say they’re making no secret of the fact that they’re not entirely convinced I should have been exonerated.”

“Can they force you out?”

“With Lex behind bars, and my mother on the run, I control the majority shares of the company, so no.” Lena shook her head, trying very hard not to stroke the soft skin under her hand. “But they can make my life difficult.”

Kara didn’t seem to notice Lena’s internal struggle. “Do you want me to throw any of them into space for you?” She asked, all earnestness. “Because I can do that.”

Lena laughed. “No, I think I can handle it. Though that mental image may be just what I needed to keep me sane through the rest of this meeting, so thank you for that.”

“The offer stands,” Kara said, still very much in protective mode, only to soften instantly when the child she was carrying stirred and whimpered, burying her face further into Kara’s chest and tugging on her fistful of curls.

“Ow, ow...” Kara gently pulled her hair free, grimacing at the unexpected strength in that grip. “Okay, I think that’s my cue to go and find this one a better place to have her nap. Call me later?”

Lena nodded. “I will.” She gave Kara a little push. “Now go, so I can get back to work.” She made sure to say it with a smile, so Kara would know she was teasing, but inwardly, her stomach clenched with the thought of going back into the boardroom. She had very little hope that this fresh bit of gossip was going to improve productivity.
And she was right.

Though... not exactly in the way she had expected.

“I’m sorry for the interruption,” she said as she resumed her seat. “Where were we?”

Crow gave her a conspiratorial wink, blue eyes twinkling. “Don’t worry about it Ms. Luthor. When my wife Rosie was still with us, she’d have had my balls if I’d ever let my secretary keep her waiting.”

Lena blinked.

“You’re too soft, Crow!” another voice chimed in. Monroe, from accounting, and usually one of Lena’s harshest critics, though she couldn’t have guessed it from the broad smile underneath his mustache. “I doubt our erstwhile leader here is leashed quite so tightly.”

“Ha!” Crow fired back. “I’d like to be there to see Miranda hear you say that! I seem to remember a certain Christmas party...” he was hushed, loudly, but there were chuckles from around the room.

“And your little Lizzy,” Fitzgerald, their communications specialist added. “She’s nearly the same age as my Tyler, isn’t she? He just had his second birthday last week.” And then he was actually pulling up pictures of the party on his tablet and leaning over to show them to her. Lena couldn’t remember ever hearing a single unprofessional word from him, and now he was thumbing through photos of his kid covered in cake, clearly smitten, and completely at ease with the situation.

“Twenty-one months actually,” she said in something of a daze. “Her birthday is in June.”

There were a few mentions of “the terrible two’s,” from around the table, and one or two commiserations from board members who had been there. Rivers snorted and put in that she was damned glad her husband was the one staying home with the kids.

Lena couldn’t quite make sense of the sudden change. From cautious cooperation at best, and open hostility at worst, to... this? She wasn’t even sure what this was. Clearly Winn had been right this morning, and seeing Kara with the child had been some kind of visual trigger for the reality shift, but why that should so completely change her board’s attitude towards her, she had no idea.

“Could we...?” she asked, tapping the agenda.

There were a few good natured sighs, and a cheerful grumble or two, but everyone shuffled their papers and got to work. It was like the first two hours had never happened, and within half an hour, they were wrapping up and she was shaking everyone’s hands and bidding them all an oddly sincere goodnight.

Lena was feeling very much off centre as she made her way back to her office.

She was looking forward to wrapping up and going home to her own apartment. She felt a slight twinge of guilt at the thought of leaving Kara alone to deal with the child and all the rest, but the professionals at the DEO had been quite clear about Lena staying out of it, and Kara hadn’t argued the point. If she wanted Lena’s help, she would have asked for it. It was that simple.

Distracted, Lena didn’t immediately notice anything different about her office. She’d intended to answer a few emails, double check her schedule for the next day, and then head home, but as soon as she sat down behind her desk, those differences became impossible to ignore. She saw the photographs first; two pictures in elegant white frames, one to either side of her monitor. The first of Kara, nose crinkled in a laugh, and the second of the child, sleeping, her precious stuffed dog tucked
under her chin.

The other additions were obvious as soon as Lena lifted her eyes from her desk. A painting hung over her couch, a landscape, not dissimilar to the one she had seen half-finished in Kara’s apartment. A few toys were scattered around the room, a pile of blocks were tucked into one corner, and a small stack of children’s books had taken up residence on her coffee table. It wasn’t much, but Lena couldn’t help but feel like her space had been invaded.

This was worse than the Board’s sudden turn around.

Abruptly deciding that she’d rather work from home, Lena gathered up her things and left the office, but Jess waved her down before she could make her escape.

“Ms. Luthor, have you had a chance to look over those event details I emailed you this afternoon?”

“Event?” Lena was drawing a blank. Lcorp didn’t have anything coming up that she knew of. Though right now, nothing would surprise her.

“Your anniversary party...” Jess explained, looking slightly concerned. “Lcorp and Catco are throwing a joint Gala fundraiser in support of LGBTQ+ rights, with you and Ms. Danvers as the guests of honour... I just need you to approve the final plans before I send them over to Mr. Olsen.”

“Oh,” of course. Lena had seen the marriage certificate, and she’d realized, abstractly, that the date was coming up, but she’d assumed they would have this sorted out by then. The idea of an anniversary party hadn’t even occurred to her. “I’m sorry, I didn’t see the email. I’ll make sure to look them over tonight.”

“Tomorrow will be fine, Ms. Luthor.” Jess assured her. “I know you prefer not to work from home.”

Really? Because this was the first she was hearing about it. Apparently married Lena had a better work/life balance than single Lena. She wondered if that was Kara’s influence, and then remembered that Kara technically had two full time jobs, so she probably wasn’t in any position to judge.

“Tomorrow, then,” Lena promised.

The drive home was uneventful, dusk just settling over the city and her apartment building was unchanged. The doorman waved her through with a tip of his hat and a cheerful “Good evening Miss. Luthor,” so she was completely unprepared for the sight that greeted her when she unlocked her front door.

It was empty.

Completely empty.

Her furniture, her books, her personal possessions... they were all gone.

Lena shut the door behind her, leaning back against it, and closing her eyes against a rising tide of panic. She was shaking, and she swallowed hard against a surge of nausea, sliding down to the floor so that she could rest her forehead against her knees.

It wasn’t about the material things. Logically, she assumed many of them would be in apartment she was supposed to be sharing with Kara, along with her clothes. Lena didn’t even have much she was particularly attached to. It was more than that.

It was her life.
She had moved to National City for a fresh start. She had been trying so hard to make a home here, to make a new name and a new life for herself. There had been setbacks, but it had all been hers; her company, her office and her apartment. And now... some want-to-be-Genie had swooped in and changed everything, and there wasn’t even anything Lena could do about it.

Criminal family drama, death threats, alien weapons and viral warfare, those she could handle. This was fucking magic, and it was so far outside of her experience that she barely even knew where to start.

She clenched her hands, wincing against the unfamiliar pinch of her rings. Lifting her head to look down at the two bands of silver lies and false promises, she was tempted to yank them off and threw them across the room, but something Kara had said stayed her hand.

She might not have the tools to deal with this, but she knew someone who would.

Swallowing her pride, Lena pulled her phone out of her purse and searched through her contacts, breathing a sigh of relief when she found the one she wanted.

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Alex had a hot cup of tea waiting when Lena came out of the bathroom in borrowed sweats and a tank top, hair still wet from her shower, and her feet bare against the hardwood floors.

“Better?” she asked, holding out the cup.

“Much,” Lena said, taking it, and sitting down on the couch. “Thank you, for letting me stay here tonight. I know it’s an imposition.”

“Don’t worry about it.” Alex took the other end of the couch, tucking her feet up underneath her. She was already dressed for bed, in leggings and a T-shirt, her brown hair tousled and her usual sharp edges softened. “I called Winn while you were in the shower to fill him in on what happened at your office and he’s pretty sure that confirms our theory on how this thing is spreading. He’s staying with Kara tonight, and he says she’s really sorry for making it worse and she’ll try not to do it again.

“That makes sense.” Lena wrapped her hands around her cup, the silver of her rings tapping softly against the ceramic. “I’m sorry,” she said. “I’m not usually this...”

“Freaked out?” Alex finished for her. She snorted. “You don’t have to apologize for that. Kara’s apartment was cleaned out too. Winn says the kid is running her ragged and she’s a superhero, so she’s not doing a whole lot better. I know I’d be a mess if this was happening to me. Hell, I’m still adjusting to the idea of being an aunt; I can’t imagine becoming a mother overnight.”

Lena winced. “That was... quite the surprise,” she admitted.

“Let me guess,” Alex said. “Children weren’t exactly in your five year plan?”

“They were, actually.” Lena laughed softly at Alex’s poorly concealed surprise. “I know, I’m not exactly the maternal type, but Lex and I used to talk about having it all, careers, love, kids... we even planned to have our children at the same time so they’d be more like siblings than cousins. He only wanted one, a boy to carry on the Luthor name, but I always thought I’d have this huge clan running around underfoot... I didn’t want them to grow up as lonely as I did, you know?” She curled into the back of the couch, drawing her legs up against her chest and resting her cup on her knees. “And then he went mad, and went to prison, and all of our plans were ruined. When Mother followed in his footsteps, I decided that was it. The last thing this world needed was another Luthor.”
“So Lizzy...”

“So Threw me,” Lena admitted. “Did you know Louise was my real mother’s name?”

Alex shook her head, expression solemn.

“I don’t remember much about her,” Lena continued. “But I remember how it felt... being loved the way a mother is supposed to love you. I suppose it might have been easier growing up with Lillian, if I hadn’t known the difference. I can’t imagine not loving a child with her name... but I’m afraid if I get attached...”

“You’ll lose her,” Alex said.

“She’s not real,” Lena pointed out. “I was never pregnant with her. I didn’t give birth to her. When you and your team break this spell, or curse, or whatever it is, she’ll be gone.”

“But she’s here now.” Alex reached out, pressing a hand to Lena’s knee. “And it’s okay to be scared, or confused, or even angry about that. If it helps, technically, she’s not just a Luthor. She’s a Luthor-Danvers, and we’re pretty hard to get rid of.”

“I’ve noticed,” Lena said dryly. “I haven’t managed to frighten Kara off yet, though she is made of steel, so I supposed she’s a little harder to scare than most.”

Alex chuckled, leaning back. “How are you doing with that by the way? I know you knew, but it’s still different, knowing something in company rather than knowing it alone.”

Lena took a sip of her tea instead of answering right away. She thought about brushing it off, but she had the feeling that if she did, she’d regret it. She had swallowed enough of her feelings lately, and Alex was surprisingly easy to talk to. “Have you ever felt, I mean really believed,” She began, “that you had this special connection with someone? And found yourself doing and saying, and feeling things that you never would have considered because you’d always been alone, but now you had this... this chance to be a part of something important? But then of course, you realized that you were wrong, and everything you’d felt and done still mattered, it was still good and that connection was still special, but it wasn’t what you thought it was...” She trailed off, biting her lip at the startled expression on Alex’s face. “I’m sorry, that was-”

“No,” Alex cut her off, gently. “It’s fine, and yes, I think I know exactly what you mean. But Lena...” She looked troubled. “I have to ask, did you...?”

“Make a wish?” Lena finished for her, when it looked like Alex wasn’t going to quite be able to bring herself to say it. “Not that I’m aware of, though I’ll admit the same thought occurred to me when that Mike, or Mon El suggested it this morning. I would have told you if I had. I may not be entirely opposed to this reality, but I’m not in the habit of wishing for things I can’t have.”

Alex nodded. “I believe you. I still think this is about Kara. Mxyzptlk was obsessed with her, and she’s always wanted a family. Deep down I think she knows Mon El isn’t exactly father material, but she trusts you. You would be a safe choice, and I know she cares about you.”

“Even if it’s not quite the way I’d prefer?” Lena added ruefully, looking down and swirling the tea in her cup. It should have been harder, she thought, to tell Alex how she felt about Kara. It had been a joke when she’d called them sisters this morning. She knew Kara had meant what she’d said in the car, but Lena had only been trying to lighten a tense moment. She’d never expected to find herself believing it, but oddly enough, she was starting to.

“You won’t say anything to Kara?” She asked, even though she was pretty sure she already knew
“No,” Alex assured her. “But you could, if you wanted to. Kara wouldn’t let it come between you. She’s pretty amazing like that.”

“Maybe,” Lena lied. “Once this is all sorted out.”

“I’m here, if you ever want to talk,” Alex offered. “But right now I think we should get some sleep. You’ve got pillows and blankets, and there are extras in the hall closet if you need them.” She stood up. “Good night, Lena.”

“Good night...” Lena set her cup down on the coffee table and set about making up the couch. Alex turned off the lights, but left a lamp on so that Lena could see what she was doing, switching it off once she was settled.

Lena didn’t think that sleep would come easily. It had been a long time since she’d slept on a couch, and there was no shortage of thoughts to keep her awake, but it seemed luck was on her side for once, and she dropped quickly into a deep, dreamless sleep that carried her gently through the night, until she awoke with the sun on her face, and the inexplicable feeling that everything would be okay.

She was also in bed with Kara again.

So it seemed like staying away from each other was off to a great start.

Chapter End Notes

And thus we enter the Groundhog Day part of our story... though I promise we won't be repeating the same day over and over. It's less of a time warp and more of a space warp. :)


For the second time is as many days, Kara didn’t wake up alone.

On the up side, they weren’t naked. On the down side, Kara wasn’t sure how she felt about being the little spoon. Big hero, big spoon it just made sense. Still, she had to admit, it was kind of... nice, having Lena curled around her. Warm, and comforting, and safe. Also, Lena smelled lovely, like lavender and honey, and the way she was holding Kara against her... gentle and soft, but without so much as a breath of space between them.

Altogether, it wasn’t a bad way to start her morning.

Except Lena had been at Alex’s last night, so what was she doing here cuddling Kara, when they were supposed to be staying apart?

There wasn’t much time to wonder.

Just as Kara was thinking she should probably try to extricate herself from this situation, Lena tensed behind her, her arm around Kara’s middle tightening for a moment, before she abruptly pulled away, shuffling back on the bed and sitting up, as far from Kara as she could get without falling off the bed.

“Sorry,” she said, voice thick with sleep and her eyes downcast as she pushed her hair back behind her ears, glossy black strands curling slightly around her fingers. “I didn’t mean to...”

Kara wasn’t disappointed. She wasn’t.

“IT’s okay,” she said hurriedly, sitting up herself and wrapping her arms around her knees. “Was Alex’s couch just horribly uncomfortable, or...?”

“The couch was fine.” Lena still wasn’t looking at her. “Your imp appears to have a sense of humour.”
Oh. Oh! Oh no... Kara opened her mouth to apologize, but as if on cue, the wailing from Lizzy’s room interrupted any attempt she might have made.

“Mommmyyyy!”

Lena winced, and Kara jumped up. “I’ll get her! You just... I’m so sorry, Lena! We’re going to figure this out, I promise.”

Lizzy was standing up in her crib when Kara opened the door, dark curls sleep-mussed and her lower lip stuck out in a pout. She looked less than thrilled to see Kara. “Mommy?”

“Sorry, Kiddo,” Kara said, picking her up. “Just me. Mommy needs a minute.”

Lizzy grumbled, but she snuggled into Kara’s shoulder anyway, little hands grabbing fistfuls of her sleep shirt. “Mommy, ‘Izzy,” she sniffled.

“I know.” Kara held her close, rubbing her back and bouncing a little as she crossed the room to the change table. “I like her too, but she doesn’t really belong to us. Does she?”

Lizzy leaned back and blew a raspberry, making her opinion on that very clear.

Kara didn’t disagree.

Not that she was ready to settle down and play housewife. She wasn’t... she didn’t like Lena like that. She couldn’t. She would have known, right? Alex hadn’t... but Alex was a little repressed. Entirely Kara’s fault of course, hello guilt, but still, Alex had human hang ups about her sexuality. Kara wasn’t human. Sure, she had grown up around humans, and yeah, it was easier to like boys, and she’d been so determined to fit in, to be average, to not stand out in any way... but surely that wouldn’t have been enough...

It might have been enough.

No.

Nope.

Not going there.

Kara was just worried about losing her friend. That was all. She wouldn’t blame Lena for wanting nothing to do with her after this. Having her entire life turned upside down was bad enough, but being dropped back into bed with Kara after last night... Kara was going to kill Mxyzptlk when she got her hands on him. Well... not kill him. But there would definitely be some punching.

A lot of punching.

Kara got Lizzy changed and dressed, diaper in the genie, and sleeper into the hamper. After twenty-four hours, she was getting the hang of this.

Socks, of course, were still off the table.

Kara considered bribery, but she was pretty sure that was a parenting no-no. Also, Lizzy was bright, and kind of greedy. Kara suspected that any attempt at trading cooperation for cookies would quickly lead to extortion, and eventual vomiting when Lizzy’s gluttony inevitably overcame her stomach capacity. Kara was pretty sure bare feet were better than barfing. She had to get Alex to teach her that no-nonsense look she’d used at the DEO. No one messed with Alex. Not even inter-dimensional
Lena was already up and moving around in the kitchen by the time they left the nursery, so Kara set the kid up with a few toys and a book on the bedroom floor while she got herself dressed and ready to go. James had covered for her yesterday, but she couldn’t skip out on work forever; she didn’t think Snapper would accept ‘unexpected reality shift’ as a legitimate personal emergency. Until Winn had the exact locations of the eight power signatures ready for pick up, there wasn’t anything she could do except go on with life as usual, or... unusual, and try not to make this any harder for Lena.

“Breakfast is on the table,” Lena said when Kara and Lizzy finally made it into the living room. Lizzy made a bid for escape towards Lena, but Kara snatched her up and strapped her into her booster seat instead.

Unlike yesterday; this morning Lena looked ready to walk into a business meeting at a moment’s notice. Her hair was twisted up into a bun, every strand perfectly in place, her makeup was flawless and her skirt suit was both professional and flattering. She had a mug in one hand and her phone in the other, leaning back against the counter while she drank her coffee and typed one-handed. She seemed completely at ease and yet entirely lacking in the playful familiarity that had flustered Kara so much the day before. She hadn’t even looked up.

Kara swallowed back her unexpected hurt and reminded herself that Lena hadn’t asked for any of this.

Breakfast was a selection of cereals, a jug of orange juice, and a bowl of sliced bananas and strawberries. Lena had set out bowls, cups and spoons as well, but only enough for two, so it didn’t look like she was planning on joining them.

“Do you want to take the Lexus today?” she asked, eyes still locked on her phone. “I can order a car to pick me up.”

“I don’t drive,” Kara said, pouring Lizzy a bowl of cheerios. “I’ve never been any good at it. Eliza always said it was because my reaction time was too fast. We’ll just take the bus.” Kara was going to miss flying to work... but it probably wouldn’t be a good idea for Supergirl to be seen with Kara Danvers’ and Lena Luthor’s kid.

“Are you sure?” Lena lifted her eyes briefly from the screen. “I’d drop you off, but...”

“We don’t want to keep messing with reality,” Kara agreed, sitting down beside Lizzy and putting her own breakfast together, while redirecting the toddler’s overflowing spoon back towards her mouth and away from the floor.

“And you’re okay with...” her eyes darted towards Lizzy.

“We’ll be fine,” Kara assured her. “I’m sure Snapper won’t even notice she’s there.”

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Snapper absolutely noticed.

Sneaking Lizzy into her private office was the easy part. Keeping her busy, and out of trouble, finishing her story and avoiding her boss...

Less easy.
Kara’s failed attempts to babysit Cat’s son Carter should have been a fair warning.

“Danvers!” Snapper’s bellow cut across the general hubbub of the newsroom. “What the hell is your kid doing here?”

Kara hastily snatched Lizzy away from the water cooler, where she had been trying, fairly successfully, to cause a flood by holding the buttons down until the water ran out over the tray and onto the floor. The carpet squelched underfoot.

“Umm...” Kara scrambled for a believable excuse. Luckily Snapper provided one for her.

“Did that lunatic wife of yours fire another nanny?” he demanded, stomping over to them, red faced and heavy browed. “This is a Newsroom, not a Daycare. Get her out of here! And get that story on my desk by the end of the day.”

“Yes, Boss,” Kara said reflexively. “Only... I can’t. Get her out of here, I mean. The story, yes, absolutely, end of the day.”

Snapper’s frown deepened. Undaunted; Lizzy reached out and patted his cheek with a damp hand, her expression sorrowful. “’Napper mad?” she asked. “’Kiss?” she offered, pursing her lips and leaning out towards the angry, bald little man.

Unbelievably, Snapper actually met her halfway, letting her plant a wet kiss on his bristly cheek. “Fine,” he grumbled, when Lizzy had settled back into Kara’s arms with a triumphant grin. “But tell Luthor, if she can’t find a new nanny, the kid can destroy her office tomorrow.”

Kara saluted, and Lizzy waved.

“Well,” Kara muttered as she hauled Lizzy back to her office. “We know who you get your charm from.”

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Lizzy escaped three more times before noon. Resulting in a paperclip storm when she broke into the supply cabinet, a ladder rescue when she somehow climbed up on the head of Cat’s giant pink panther, and a fifteen minute lock down, including a floor by floor search when she found her way onto the elevator, and discovered yet more buttons to play with.

All in all, when James offered to take them out to lunch, Kara was more than ready for a break.

“So, motherhood... how are you enjoying that so far?” he asked, unable to completely hide his amusement at her expense as he joined Kara and Lizzy in the elevator. Lizzy was reaching for the buttons, but Kara wasn’t letting go of her hand this time.

Kara would have scowled, but she just didn’t have the energy. “Be glad you’re not the one who got roped into this with me,” she said, so glad that he wasn’t one of the ones affected by the reality shift. “I think Lena’s going to disown me when this is over.”

James sobered. “It’s not your fault, Kara.” He wrapped an arm around her shoulders, giving her a sideways hug. “And besides, anyone would be lucky to be married to you, even with the evil little rugrat, here.” He ruffled Lizzy’s hair and she stuck her tongue out at him. “You’re a catch.”

“I don’t feel like a catch right now,” Kara mumbled.

“Hey,” James took her by the shoulders and gently turned her to face him, ducking a little to catch
her eye. “Is there something else going on here? Do you have a bit of a thing for Lena?”

Kara forced a laugh. “No, of course not. Why would you even think that? We’re friends. She’s my friend, and this is super unfair to her. I’m just worried that it’s going to be too much, that’s all.

James looked skeptical.

“It’s complicated?” Kara tried. “I don’t know... how would I even know if it was real, anyway? What if this spell or wish or whatever it is, is acting on us too?”

James shrugged, leading the way out of the elevator as the doors opened on the ground floor. “I don’t know. But you can always talk to me, okay? I’m here for you, Kara.”

Kara sighed, and followed him, tugging Lizzy along behind her and heading for the front doors. “Can we please just have lunch? No feelings, or fifth dimensions, or Supergirl, or imps, or...” James held the door open for her, and she crossed through. “…Lena?”

Kara blinked.

She had expected to walk out into a sunny afternoon and instead she had stepped right into Lena’s immaculate white office.

“Mommy!” Lizzy squealed, yanking her hand free of Kara’s and running across the polished floor and around the big white desk to scramble up onto Lena’s lap. She sat herself down and immediately reached for the keyboard. Lena looked a little startled, but she quickly pushed it back out of reach, and wrapped an arm around Lizzy’s waist to prevent her from climbing onto the desk after it.

“Kara,” she said, picking Lizzy up and putting her back on the floor before rising and walking around the desk. “What are you doing here?” There was a hint of reproach in her voice.

“I... um...” Kara’s phone rang. “Just a second.”

She answered it. “James?”

“Where are you? I turned around and you were just gone...”

“Um... Lcorp?”

“Are you okay? How did you get there?”

“I’m fine, and I have no idea. Sorry James, I have to go. I’ll see you back at the office.”

“Okay, call me if you need help getting back. Bye, Kara.”

“Bye, James.” Kara hung up the call.

“Sorry,” she said, tucking the phone back into her pocket. “I was just leaving Catco with James for lunch. I walked through the door and ended up here. Some kind of teleportation I guess...”

“Apparently we’re not allowed to see other people,” Lena observed drily.

“No, no, it was just a friend’s lunch,” Kara hastened to explain. “James is a friend. We did date, for like a week, but I think I had already friend-zoned him or something, because it was beyond awkward, but-“

“Kara,” Lena cut her off. “I was just teasing.”
“Oh, good!” Kara said without thinking, stammering when Lena raised a questioning eyebrow. “I mean, yesterday you were teasing me pretty much constantly, and it was kind of embarrassing, but also, nice? Then today you seemed... I don’t know. I feel like I should apologize.”

“You’ve already, apologized,” Lena pointed out, puzzled. “More than once. I told you, none of this is your fault.”

“Not that,” Kara hedged. “I think, that maybe I hurt you... when you found out I didn’t know you knew I was Supergirl.”

“Oh.” Lena sat down on the couch, her spine perfectly straight and her hands folded neatly in her lap, expression carefully neutral.

“I did, didn’t I?” Kara felt like the worst friend in the world. She sat down beside her, determined to make this better at least. “Rao, Lena. I am so sorry.”

“Don’t.” Lena held up a hand, her green eyes bright and fierce. “You didn’t do anything wrong, Kara. I misinterpreted things, that’s all.”

“That’s just it,” Kara said. “I don’t think you did.”

Lena tilted her head. “What do you mean?”

Kara twisted her hands together in her lap, fidgeting with the silver ring on her finger. “There aren’t many people in my life, at least, not many people I really care about, who only know me as Kara Danvers. And lately... I feel like she’s been disappearing. Even at Catco, most of my stories are about the cases I work for the DEO. I’m even using Supergirl as a source, because I barely have any time for any real reporting, but with you...” She looked up, willing Lena to understand.

“With you, I was just your friend Kara. Not because I could stop bullets or fly, but because we liked each other, and we believed in each other. I didn’t want to lose that. I think I knew finding out I was an alien wouldn’t scare you away, you’re tougher than that, but I thought it would change things... that you might be interested in Kara anymore, if you could be friends with Supergirl instead.”

“Kara...” Lena said softly, untangling her hands, and taking them in her own. “I meant it when I said that you were my real hero. Supergirl may be amazing, but she’s not you. Kara Danvers is who you are, and I’m honoured to be your friend.”

“Kara Zor El, actually,” Kara corrected her with a catch in her voice, swallowing completely unnecessary tears. “That’s my real name, the one my parents gave me on Krypton.”

Lena smiled a little sadly, but there was twinkle in her eyes when she said “I like Kara Luthor-Danvers better, myself. Though if you’re going to insist on being modern and keep your name, I suppose we could amend it to Kara El-Danvers.”

Kara snorted, bumping her shoulder against Lena’s. “Would that make you Lena El-Danvers?”

Lena looked thoughtful. “Maybe. It might be nice, not to be a Luthor anymore. I’ll take it under consideration. Now come on,” she stood up, pulling Kara to her feet. “You were going to lunch, and I’m sure you’re hungry. Since you’re here anyway, we might as well send Jess out for something to eat.”

“Oh I’m fine...” Kara protested, trailing off when her stomach interrupted with a growl. “Or not... Chinese?”
Lena laughed. “I’m sure that can be arranged. I’ll just-“

There was a loud crash and they both turned to find a potted plant smashed into a pile of dirt and ceramic shards on the floor beside Lena’s desk. Lizzy still on her tip-toes, one hand on the edge of the desk, the other stretching up into the space where the plant had just been sitting, three seconds before, and a clear ‘What? It was like that when I got here,’ expression on her face.

Kara sighed. “I’ll clean that up, you talk to Jess about the food.”

This was definitely turning into a pot sticker kind of day.
Lena drove Kara and the kid back to Catco after lunch. She watched from the car as they made their way up the front steps, pausing at the door to turn and wave with identical grins. She waved back, dropping her forehead to the steering wheel once they were out of sight.

“Lena Luthor,” she said to herself. “You absolute idiot.”

She’d had a plan.

She’d meant to keep her distance, friendly, but formal. Ignore the temptation to pretend, just for a little while, that this was real. That she could have this. That someone with her history, her family, could ever have this.

And then she’d invited them to stay for lunch.

In her defence, Kara was... there was no defence against Kara. Supergirl, yes. Lena could have held out against the caped hero. Amazing, inspiring, unbelievable as she was, Supergirl was more of a symbol than a person. She was as brilliant as the sun, but ultimately untouchable.

Kara, on the other hand, was so very touchable.

Lena couldn’t look at her without wanting to touch her. This morning had been torture; waking up with Kara in her arms, the smell of her in her lungs, and the all-encompassing certainty that this was exactly where she belonged.

Until she remembered that she didn’t, they didn’t. Belong. Not together.

Retreat had been the only option that might leave her with a little dignity. But then Kara had to go and be so... Kara.

It was all very unfair.
By the time she got back to Lcorp, Lena was in an utterly wretched mood. Jess took one look at her and wisely said nothing, but if there were any calls or visitors that afternoon, they never made it past the secretary’s desk, and Lena was left to work alone in the quiet sanctuary of her office.

The sunlight through her windows shifted and faded as afternoon wore into evening. Jess stepped in to let her know she was heading home at six, hovering awkwardly in the doorway after Lena said goodnight and went back to reviewing the reports on her desk.

“Was there anything else?” Lena asked when it became apparent that Jess wasn’t leaving.

Jess shifted nervously. “Is everything all right, Ms. Luthor?”

“Everything is fine, why?”

“It’s just...you seemed upset earlier, when you came back from lunch. You almost never work late, and when you do, Ms. Danvers always calls to ask me to remind you to go home, but it’s past six now, and I haven’t heard from her, and I was just wondering...I’m sorry if I’m overstepping.”

Lena couldn’t remember the last time she’d left work before six. Though with a wife like Kara and a child to go home to things might have been different. She was really starting to hate this imp. Purely on principle.

“It’s all right,” Lena said, lying through her teeth. “I already told Kara I’d be a little late tonight. I’m just finishing up now.”

“Okay.” Jess looked relieved. Lena wondered just how unbearable she was supposed to be when everything wasn’t fine at home. “Is there anything I can help you with?” she asked hopefully.

Lena shook her head, resigning herself to an early night. Somehow she didn’t think Jess was going to leave until she was sure Lena was leaving too, and she didn’t have the energy to argue with her. Tidying up her desk, she tucked the reports into a file and put them away in her desk, hearing the click of the lock as she closed the drawer. “There, all done.”

This time Jess accepted the dismissal for what it was, offering a final goodnight, and closing the door behind her. Lena lingered long enough to be sure that she wouldn’t run into the secretary on her way out before following. It wasn’t that she didn’t appreciate Jess’ concern, but it felt dishonest to accept it, knowing that it wasn’t really for her. Just like her board member’s sudden turnabout wasn’t a victory she had earned.

She pressed the button for the elevator, not sure exactly where she was going once she got to her car. Somehow she and Kara hadn’t actually discussed their living arrangements. Of course Kara would stay with the child. Until they knew exactly what she was, and why she was here, Kara was the best choice to watch over her. But where did that leave Lena? So long as they were trying to minimize the collateral damage by staying away from each other, and doing a wonderful job of that so far by the way, Lena needed to make alternate plans. She didn’t want to impose on Alex again, so perhaps a hotel?

The decision was taken out of Lena’s hands when the elevator arrived, and Kara stepped out, sleepy toddler on one hip, bag over the other shoulder, glasses slightly askew, and looking more exhausted than Lena had ever seen her. She had clearly been expecting to find the Catco lobby on the other side of the doors, and she nearly stumbled, coming up short when she recognized Lena in front of
“Oh,” She fixed her glasses, stepping back a little to blink confusedly at the hallway around them. “This is Lcorp again, isn’t it?”

“Another date?” Lena asked, archly.

Kara snorted, but she looked too tired to rise to the bait. “Home,” she said, covering up a yawn with her free hand. “Or at least, that was the plan... I don’t suppose we could catch a ride?”

“Of course.” Lena ushered them back onto the elevator, and pressed the button for the parking garage, steadying Kara with a hand on her shoulder. She was swaying alarmingly. “Are you all right?”

“Fine.” Kara mumbled. “I’m just really, really tired. I thought fighting aliens and super villains was hard...” She made a face, scrunching up her nose. “They’re easy. Keeping this one,” she shifted the child on her hip, “from pulling Catco down around our ears? Much worse. And Snapper says I can’t bring her in tomorrow, and Winn called, he has the first signature location pinpointed for Supergirl to check out tomorrow, and I don’t know what I’m going to do with her...” Kara sighed. “I don’t think I’m cut out for this...”

Lena bit her lip. She blamed the utterly woebegone blue of Kara’s eyes for what she said next. “I could take her... tomorrow.”

“Really?” Hope brought a little life back into Kara’s voice. “You wouldn’t mind?”

“We’re in this together,” Lena said, guiding Kara off the elevator, down the short hallway, and out the doors into the parking garage with a gentle hand on her shoulder. “And my secretary will be thrilled.”

Kara’s answering smile wasn’t quite as bright as usual, but it was no less sincere for being a little dimmer. “You’re my favourite. Seriously, but why would Jess be happy? Literally no one at Catco was happy.”

“She’s worried about us,” Lena said, nudging Kara towards the car. “Apparently, I never work late. She thought something might be wrong at home when I didn’t leave in time for dinner.”

“Hah!” Kara looked smug. “I knew you’d be a good family man...er...person...woman? Family woman? That sounds weird. I mean it, though... You’re good at literally everything, so you’d be good at this too.” Her sweeping and slightly uncoordinated gesture took in all three of them.

“Careful.” Lena unlocked the car and took Kara’s bag off her shoulder, tossing it into the trunk while Kara fumbled through securing the child into her car seat. Lena absolutely did not double check to make sure the straps were all tight and the buckles were fastened before going back around to her side of the car. “I might just decide to keep you.”

“Hmm...” Kara hummed from the passenger seat, taking three tries to get her own seatbelt done up. “We could do worse.”

“So could I,” Lena admitted, starting the car. “I’ll drop you off at the apartment, and check into a hotel for the night.”

Kara blinked sleepily at her. “A hotel?”

“We’re supposed to be staying apart,” Lena reminded her, backing out of her parking space and
steering towards the exit.

“But won’t that cause problems for you?” Kara murmured, drowsy blue eyes already half-closed. “If Jess already thinks we’re fighting? What if someone finds out that you’re staying in a hotel and starts digging around for a scoop?”

Lena shrugged, pulling out into traffic and heading for their apartment. “I can handle a few nosy reporters.”

“Shouldn’t have to,” Kara protested. “Come home. I’ll sleep on the couch. We can try staying away again tomorrow.”

Lena hesitated. She knew she should say no. Even if their imp dropped them back into bed together in the morning, she should at least try to stick to the plan. For her own sake, if not for the general integrity of reality.

“Please,” Kara added softly, nearly asleep.

Lena’s resistance crumbled. “Fine. But I’m sleeping on the couch. You’re exhausted, and Supergirl has work to do tomorrow.”

“’Kay…” Kara snuggled back into her seat, streetlights glinting off of blond curls as her eyes fluttered closed. Soft snores from the back seat revealed she wasn’t the only one worn out by a long day.

Lena stubbornly refused to find any of this endearing, tamping down firmly on the warm glow trying to take over her insides.

“Absolute idiot,” she reminded herself, but softly, so she didn’t wake anyone up.

*****

The next morning, Lena was unsurprised to open her eyes and find herself once again in bed with Kara, instead of on the couch. This time she was lying half-on top of the superhero, head resting on Kara’s chest, both hands tangled up in her t-shirt, and one leg thrown over both of hers. There was an arm wrapped around her waist, soft finger tips just barely brushing the skin under the edge of her shirt.

It was early enough that the light coming in through the window was soft and pink, and from the steady rise and fall under her cheek, Lena guessed that Kara was still asleep. She wondered briefly if whatever magic was responsible had arranged them this way on purpose, or if it only demanded they both be in the same bed and the snuggling was optional. Either way, Lena should probably move. But Kara made an unexpectedly soft pillow, and she had been so tired last night... surely letting her sleep for a few more minutes couldn’t hurt.

Lena’s conscience put up surprisingly little fight, so rather than get up; she slipped back into a pleasant doze, not quite asleep, but not completely awake either. She was warm, and comfortable, and not alone, and if she was fooling herself, well... she was the only one who had to know.

Of course, it couldn’t last forever.

The now familiar wail of “Mommmy!” burst that particular bubble rather thoroughly.

Lena grumbled into Kara’s chest, and started to pull away, but a hand on the small of her back held her in place. When she looked up, untangling her hands from Kara’s shirt and smoothing the fabric under her fingers, Kara was grinning a little sheepishly at her.
“Guess the couch wasn’t good enough,” she said.

“Apparently not,” Lena agreed. “Sorry about...” she tapped her fingers against Kara’s chest, trying to ignore the way their positions pressed certain portions of their anatomy together.

“It’s fine.” Almost hesitantly, Kara reached up and pushed a lock of hair back behind Lena’s ear. “I don’t mind.” Her expression turned quizzical. “Unless you do...?”

“No,” Lena answered hurriedly, inwardly cursing her own complete hopelessness. “Not if you don’t...?” Ugh, this was pathetic. She was almost grateful for the second, more demanding, shriek from the nursery, if only because it spared her any further embarrassment as they hastily scrambled out of bed.

The rest of the morning routine was almost starting to feel familiar, the only difference being that this time Kara left from the balcony rather than the front door, and Lena was left to watch her zip away, a thrilled toddler squirming in her arms.

“Mama fy!” she shouted, waving her arms in the air, as if trying to follow. “’Izzy fy!”

“I don’t think so.” Lena tightened her grip. “You’re staying with me today.”

“Wi’s Mommy?”

“Something like that.”

“Cookah?”

Lena sighed. “One.”

*****

Jess was, as predicted, delighted to see Lena show up with the toddler.

Lena was... less excited.

She’d made the offer in a moment of weakness, but now, faced with the cold, hard reality of spending an entire day supervising a small child, a small child that had already worn out a superhero no less, she was having some serious second thoughts.

The child in question had no such doubts. After interrogating Jess on the subject of cookies, a disappointing endeavor, she cheerfully led the way into Lena’s office as if it was her own, dragging the little backpack of toys and snacks Kara had packed behind her. She sat herself down on the floor in front of Lena’s desk, tugging ineffectually on the zipper. “Mommy, open!” She demanded, slapping her little hands down on the bag, lower lip stuck out in a practiced pout. “stuck!”

Lena automatically reached for the bag, then paused. Magical construct or not, she wasn’t going to be ordered around by a child. “Try again,” she said, crossing her arms.

The pout was replaced by a measuring stare. Blue eyes narrowed thoughtfully under a fringe of dark curls. Kara had tried to tame the wild mop into pig tails this morning, but they were quickly losing their structural integrity.

Lena waited.

“Mommy, p’ease.” The request was offered grudgingly, but it was good enough for now.
“Better.” Lena took the bag and opened it, setting the snacks aside on her desk for later, and handing it back. The familiar white dog was pulled out immediately and after a wistful glance at the confiscated snacks, was carried off towards the pile of blocks in the corner.

Lena left her to it, and sat down at her desk, unrolling the first of a pile of schematics Jess had brought for her to review. She lost herself in the familiar work, marking out notations and suggested changes, almost forgetting she wasn’t alone in the room until one of the finished pages she’d re-rolled and set aside started sliding off the table.

She eyed the culprit, tugging the roll free of chubby fingers and setting it back on the desk. “No,” she said firmly, going back to her current set of plans.

The roll slid away again.

Lena put it back.

The third time, Lena carried the offender back over to the blocks and toy shelf, setting her down on the small carpet. “These are your toys.” She pointed to the desk. “Those are mine.”

“’Izzy, hulp.”

“No.”

“P’ease?” This time the word was given all the wide-eyed sincerity any parent could have wished for, complete with trembling lower lip and just the right amount of quaver.

Lena was 98% certain she was being conned, but the kid had asked nicely... “Fine.” She sorted through the pile, picking out one she’d marked as a reject, and handed it over along with a pencil, and sat back down, ostensibly to work, but unable to resist watching out of the corner of her eye to see how this played out.

First, the pencil was abandoned in favour of unrolling the paper, but keeping it unrolled proved frustratingly difficult for twenty-one month old dexterity. Sitting on it worked, but then she couldn’t reach the pencil. She tried using her dog to hold the paper down, but he wasn’t heavy enough. She looked around the room, little brow furrowed.

Allowing the paper to re-roll, she returned to the block corner, carefully selecting four small wooden blocks, and carrying them over one at a time. Spreading the paper out, she set one on each corner, clapping her hands and grinning up at Lena when all four were in place and the paper stayed flat.

Lena wordlessly handed her a cookie from the pile of snacks. Impressed in spite of herself.

The reward was accepted graciously, and for the next thirty minutes, they worked in tandem, each on their own projects, both equally serious. But a toddler’s attention span, even this toddler’s attention span, had a limit, and eventually, Lena glanced up to see blue eyes peering over the edge of the desk.

Without saying anything, Lena took out one of the cookies and set it on the desk, just a little too far from the edge for reaching hands, and went back to her work, curious to see if the kid could solve this problem.

The direct approach proved futile. She tried to reach the cookie from different angles, stretching up on her tip toes and trying with first one hand, and then the other, but Lena had judged the distance carefully, and that wasn’t going to work.
The block approach was tried again, but the blocks were too small, and a stack didn’t stay together well enough for little feet to climb on them. Lena bit her lip to keep from laughing at the tiny huff of frustration from under the desk.

She carefully didn’t look up when she heard the successive thumps of books being pulled out of the book shelf. Several different options were tried and discarded for being too thin, or too slippery, until a thick picture dictionary proved just right, and the cookie disappeared, replaced by the sound of triumphant crunching.

Lena gave her time to finish before putting down her pencil and rolling her chair back. She’d planned on leaving the child with Jess while she visited the labs, but she found herself curious to see what the toddler would think of it all. She was even considering sending a message down ahead, to ask if a few simple, and safe, but entertaining demonstrations might be set up.

“Lizzy,” she said, offering a hand. “Would you like to come and see Mommy’s work?”

Lizzy beamed, an all too familiar grin, and climbed to her feet, closing her little fingers around Lena’s. “Izzy go w’is Mommy,” she said. “P’ease.”
Giving Up

Chapter Summary

Kara can’t catch a break, Lizzy gets to blow things up, and Lena’s had enough.

Chapter Notes

Whoo! finally got this one up!

Thank you all so much for the huge response to chapter 7! All the comments and kudos really kept me going while I was trying to find time to make this chapter behave.

Should be back to semi-regular updates now.

Enjoy!

“Winn, I still don’t see anything...” Kara paused in her seventh sweep of the park, pulling up to wave at a little boy and his mother feeding ducks by the pond, before speeding off again, scanning the area for anything out of place. “There’s nothing here.”

“It’s there.” Winn’s voice in her ear mirrored Kara’s frustration. They’d been at this all day and hope was waning. “It has to be. This is the strongest of the readings...”

Unless it’s a fifth dimensional rock, tree or empty pop can,” Kara said, stooping to pick up the can in question and drop it in a nearby trash can before continuing. “I don’t see how I could have missed it. Do they even have rocks in the fifth dimension?”

“You’re asking me?” The rapid tapping of keys in the background was louder than usual, as if there was more than the necessary amount of force involved in depressing each one.

Kara sighed. “What if someone already found whatever they are?” she asked, landing lightly on the top of a pile of shining metal that was probably supposed to be art, but resembled nothing so much as a geometric caterpillar trying to turn itself inside out. She really preferred landscapes. “Maybe what you’re seeing is just residual energy...”

“No, then the levels would be dropping,” Winn argued, stubbornly. “There must be something we’re missing... maybe if you took the portable scanner and use it to triangulate the signal, or set up a sympathetic resonance...” his voice faded in and out as if he was moving around his desk and forgetting where his microphone was.

“Winn?”

“Hmm?”

“You’re losing me.”
“Oh, sorry.” His voice got clearer. “Looks like we have to go back to the drawing board over here.”

“Okay,” Kara leapt back into the air, leaving the park behind and aiming for the heart of the city. “I have to get back to Catco, Snapper has me working on a big story about the social impact of interspecies relationships between humans and aliens in the wake of the President’s amnesty act, and I have interviews to set up. How long do you think until you’re ready to try again?”

“No idea. I’ll do my best, but we’re kind of swamped over here. Alien activity is way up, and not in a friendly way. Alex thinks it might have something to do with the whole reality manipulating situation. She’s gone to talk to Maggie about it, see if she’s heard anything.”

Kara slowed, frowning. “Should I come in?”

“Nah, we’ve got it covered for now. We’ll let you know if we need the big guns, and I’ll see what I can do about our tracking problem. You free to try again tomorrow?”

“Sure, so long as Lizzy hasn’t frightened Lena off, yet.”

Winn snorted. “I still can’t believe she’s the one that got dragged into this. I mean, Mon El was right there...”

Kara winced. She should really find the time to talk to Mon El about that. “Seriously Winn? Can you honestly see Mon El of Daxam raising a child?”

“Good point,” Winn conceded. “But Lena Luthor? Why her, and not, say James?”

“Why not James?”

Kara had asked herself the same question. In some ways it would have been easier to do this with James. They made sense. They always had, but then... so did she and Mon El; two aliens without a home, the last of their people, stranded by the same cataclysm... but making sense wasn’t enough for her anymore. She needed more than Winn’s Wapow, too. Chemistry was great, but in spite of the whole waking up in bed together every morning thing, she didn’t think this was about sex.

It felt more like family.

Which scared her, and thrilled her, and made her feel terribly guilty.

Because Kara didn’t hate it.

She was annoyed, and uncomfortable, a little embarrassed and confused, but aside from all of that... if she had to pick someone, anyone, right now, to have a family with...

So yeah, guilt.

Lena hadn’t asked for this.

Kara hadn’t either, but she was sort of used to the weirdness that was her life. She’d known what she was doing when she put on the cape. Sometimes it was rogue aliens and the end of world, and sometimes it was toddlers appearing out of thin air, stealing cookies and refusing to put on their socks.

Toddlers with her father’s eyes.

The worst part was, it wasn’t everything that was wrong about this situation that was tying Kara up in knots. It was everything that felt right.
And she couldn’t put any of that on Lena. Kara had felt her getting ready to bolt this morning when they’d woken up in each other’s arms, and it had been instinctual to pull her closer, reassure her that it was okay, she didn’t have to freak out, or apologize. Kara didn’t want her to have to worry about Kara’s comfort levels. They might be in this together, but Lena was the real victim here, and while Kara might not be quite as angry as she probably should have been on her own behalf, she was furious on Lena’s.

“James has enough daddy issues already,” Kara said, not willing to go into any of that with Winn.

“Too true.” Winn chuckled. “All right, I’m going to let you go. We’ll figure it out, Kara. I promise.”

“I know,” Kara assured him, ignoring the small, selfish part of her that was relieved at the delay, and setting a course for Catco.

*****

Snapper was not pleased she’d been gone all day, and he was only slightly mollified when she told him she’d been out hunting down sources for her story. A lie she spent the rest of afternoon and evening trying to turn into a truth, along with interrupting two muggings, putting out a house fire, lifting a bus full of elderly tourists out of the way of oncoming traffic when their driver fell asleep at the wheel, retrieving a little girl’s lunch money from a bully, and then buying lunch for said bully when he confessed tearfully that he didn’t have one. She’d notified the school and made a call to social services about that, before hugging both children goodbye and taking off for Catco again.

By the time the city was quiet and she had enough material to make a start on her story, Kara was exhausted.

Also a little worried that she hadn’t heard from Lena yet. Given her own experience with Lizzy-at-the-office the day before, she’d been half-expecting a panicked phone call, or sirens, but there had been nothing.

Choosing the cape over the bus, Kara flew home, wobbling only a little when she alighted on the balcony. The sun felt very far away and cold as she pushed open the door into the living room, blinking at the unexpected site that greeted her.

“Mama!” Lizzy called from the table, where... Kara could only describe it as chaos had taken over. She and Lena were both liberally dusted with white powder, and the sharp tang of vinegar made Kara’s sensitive nose twitch. Boxes of baking soda, bowls of gritty goop (still faintly bubbling,) measuring cups, spoons, and bottles were piled around them. The current experiment seemed to involve plastic bags and toilet paper, and if Lizzy’s delighted expression was anything to go by, so far it was a success.

Lena, work clothes abandoned in favour of Jeans and a t-shirt, offered Kara a slightly sheepish smile, running a hand through her white-streaked hair, and tucking it back behind her ears. Lizzy on the other hand, showed no hesitation in wriggling her way down from her chair, grabbing Kara’s hand and dragging her over to the table to show off their work. “Mama,” she said again. “Mommy, Boom!” She clapped her hands for emphasis before raising her arms imperiously and demanding to be lifted back into her chair. “Up!”

Lena raised a brow. “Lizzy...”


Kara was already a little thrown by casual, messy, and clearly enjoying herself Lena... she was not
prepared for mind your manners, mom Lena. It was... illuminating.

She took a step back, hands tangling together, fingers nervously twisting her wedding ring.

“Kara?...” Lena must have been able to read some of her inner turmoil on her face, because she sounded concerned. “Are you okay?”

“Fine...” Kara took another step back, towards their room. “You two are busy. I'll stay with Alex tonight, I just... I'll only be a minute.”

She thought she heard Lena call after her, but Kara ignored it, using a blur of super speed to pack an overnight bag. She grabbed clothes at random, nearly blinded by a sudden and helpless rage at the being who could dangle this in front of her... for fun, when she couldn’t keep it. Or even admit she wanted it.

“Kara!” Lena’s voice, sharper now, brought Kara up short at the door to the balcony. “What’s wrong?”

She had washed her hands, but the scent of vinegar and baking soda still clung to her. She crossed her arms across her chest, and Kara couldn’t help but see the silver glint of rings still on her finger.

“Everything,” Kara said helplessly. “Everything about this is wrong.”

Lena’s eyes widened with either hurt or surprise. Kara couldn’t be sure which and she didn’t trust herself to stay and find out. “Say goodnight to Lizzy for me,” she said in a rush, launching herself back into the air before Lena could argue.

*****

Alex didn’t ask any questions when Kara came swooping in through her window, bag over her shoulder, and the weight of lost worlds in her eyes. She simply picked up her phone to order pizza without a word.

She also tried to cancel her date with Maggie, but Kara didn’t let her. She couldn’t be responsible for ruining anyone else’s life today. Her conscience was heavy enough. Still, Alex insisted on inviting the detective over for dinner and a movie marathon instead of going out. Kara might have kept arguing, but Alex just gave her the look, the one that meant not even Kryptonian strength was going to be enough to move her, and Kara gave in, relieved in spite of herself, that she wouldn’t be alone. That this at least was still real and still hers.

Maggie, of course, was less sympathetic.

Which was another kind of relief.

She teased Kara about being in the doghouse, completely unaware that her marriage to Lena was an interdimensional joke, entertaining them between movies with anecdotes both hilarious and awful about the perils and pitfalls of dating women.

“I did tell her,” Alex whispered to Kara while they cleared the dishes out of the living room and Maggie made up the couch. “She refused to believe me until I got Winn and J’onn to confirm it. Even then I’m pretty sure she thought we were crazy, and she still keeps forgetting it’s not real. I’m sorry...” She hesitated. “Apparently you and Lena are just too believable as a couple...”

Which was the closest Alex would come to fishing.
Kara shrugged, putting the last cup into the dishwasher. “It’s okay. She’s being sweet, really. And that story about the girl and the danish...” she shook her head, grinning in spite of herself.

Alex chuckled. “She is pretty great, isn’t she?” she asked, hazel eyes going all gooey as she watched Maggie cursing over trying to fit an oversized pillow into a regular pillowcase.

“Yeah,” Kara agreed. “You got lucky, big sister.”

“I really did.” Alex glanced over at her. “You know I’m here, right? For more than Pizza,” she added. “If you need to talk...”

“Yeah,” Kara assured her. “It’s just... family, you know?”

Alex nodded. “I know.”

And she did, Kara could tell. Even without any of the details, Alex knew.

She reached out and took Kara’s hand, giving it a reassuring squeeze before going over to help Maggie with the pillows.

*****

The next morning Kara and Lena woke up on opposite sides of the bed for the first time.

It should have been a relief, but the tension was far too thick. Green eyes glittered dangerously from across the mattress as Kara blinked her way back to consciousness.

“Lena...?” She mumbled, combing blond tangles back behind her ears and sitting up, sensing she was in trouble, but not quite sure why.

“You left.”

Oh, right. That. In the cold light of morning, Kara could admit she might have... overreacted. She winced. “I’m sorry. Were... is Lizzy okay?”

Lena softened. Slightly, sitting up and drawing her knees up to her chest. “She’s fine, though she wasn’t happy about going to bed without a kiss from her Mama. I had to read two stories.” There was just a wisp of humour in that admission, enough that Kara could take a deeper breath, reassured that she hadn’t messed up too badly.

“I’m sorry,” she said again. “I shouldn’t have just left her with you. I...” she hesitated, not sure how to explain it without giving too much away, but Lena stopped her with a look that begged her not to make excuses, and she swallowed the lie.

“You’re allowed to freak out, Kara. Just...” She bit her lip, anger fading, and leaving a flicker of vulnerability in its place. “Just talk to me, okay? I don’t know how many more times I can tell you we’re in this together before I start to wonder if it’s true. You can’t shut me out like that again, I don’t have...” She closed her eyes and took a breath before refocusing on Kara, hands twisted in the blankets draped over her knees. “You’re still my only real friend in this city, and I don’t think I can do this alone.”

Kara swallowed, a tangle of mixed emotions threatening to choke her. “You’re not alone, Lena. I promise.”

There was a moment... when Kara might have shifted closer, or Lena might have reached out, but
before either of them could move, they were interrupted. Not by Lizzy this time, though her familiar shrill demands for release came right on cue a second or two later, but by Kara’s cell phone.

“It’s the DEO,” Kara said, gaze flicking uncertainly between the phone and the direction of the nursery.

“Take it,” Lena told her, already getting up. “I’ve got this. Go be a hero,” she added with a smirk.

“Kara,” Winn didn’t bother with pleasantries when Kara answered the call. “Remember those big guns I said we didn’t need? Well, I was wrong. I’m sending a location to your phone, can you meet Alex there?”

Kara was already halfway into her supersuit.

“On my way.” She ended the call and finished getting ready in a swirl of red and blue.

*****

Winn hadn’t been kidding about the increase in alien activity.

Instead of getting back to the search for the talisman, or working on her story for Snapper, Kara spent most of the day wrangling aliens, both registered and unregistered, with Alex and Maggie. Something had them all riled up, but no one was talking. They took a few of the rowdier offenders into custody, including one especially tough customer who managed to land a hit on Maggie and nearly got his head blown off when Alex caught up, her favourite gun in hand (Kara found herself in the unfamiliar position of protecting the angry alien from her sister,) but most of them just got their heads knocked together and a stern warning.

Maggie was fine, but Alex still sent her back to the DEO to get checked out while they continued knocking on doors and trying to find out what the heck was going on, while trying to prevent civilian casualties from whichever alien/s was/were currently trying to run amok.

Oh, and Kara couldn’t walk through doors without a buddy. That made everything so much more fun.

It seemed their personal imp wasn’t best pleased that Kara and Lena were still resisting its grand plan, and it was determined to force them together, but it seemed it could only move one person around at a time, one adult anyway, apparently children rode for free. Kara unintentionally interrupted Lena’s day three times before she figured that one out. Fortunately, there was no one else in Lena’s office at the time to witness their daughter running up to Supergirl yelling “Mama!”

That would have been difficult to explain.

So Kara stuck close to Alex, and made sure to grab hold of her arm, a corner of her jacket or on one occasion her belt, whenever they had to walk through a door. It wasn’t a huge inconvenience out in the field, but it got trickier at Catco, when she flew in to drop off her notes. One advantage of spending the day with aliens, she had plenty more material for her story, but it was a little difficult to work on it when she couldn’t go in or out of a room by herself.

She gave James credit for trying not to laugh at her.

By the end of the day, tired, bruised, annoyed, and having made absolutely zero progress in solving anything, Kara was spoiling for a fight.

“Is this absolutely necessary?” Lena asked, getting Lizzy ready for bed while Kara made shameless
use of her superspeed and strength to rearrange all of the furniture in the apartment.

“If it can’t move two people at a time,” Kara pointed out, carefully setting their bed down in the middle of living room and picking up the couch. “Maybe it won’t be able to put all the furniture back and put us back in the same night.”

Lena rolled her eyes.

“Wha’ Mama do?” Lizzy asked, one finger stuck in the corner of her mouth, and her dog dangling from her other hand as Lena carried her to the nursery, which Kara had been forbidden to touch.

“Going crazy,” Lena told her, leaving Kara to work out her interdimensional pissing contest without an audience.

“Izzy go wi’s Mama?”

“Not tonight.”

“Kay.”

It was a wasted effort.

Furniture proved easier to manipulate than people, and they woke up back in bed together, in their bedroom, with everything else back in place.

To add insult to injury, the dishes had also been washed, dried and put away, and there was a fresh bouquet of flowers on the dining table. Lena snatched them up before Kara could fry them with her heat vision. They could re-varnish the scorch mark she left in their place. Probably.

Lena started a list of family rules, and put it on the fridge.

Rule number one was “No lasers in the house.”

Kara tried staying up all night, patrolling the city. The imp countered with a thunderstorm.

She woke up soaked and smelling of ozone, with Lena curled against her chest, and her sodden cape wrapped around them both.

Rule number two, “No wet superheroes in the bed.”

Kara tried to protest that that one hadn’t been her fault, but a slightly bedraggled Lena cut her off with a glare as she shoved the laundry basket full of damp sheets into her hands, and pointed to the door.

Kara smugly added the third rule the next morning when Lizzy, apparently feeling she wasn’t receiving due consideration, dumped her cup of grape juice all over Lena’s white blouse.

Rule number three, “No swearing.”

Lena gritted her teeth, but let it stand.

Meanwhile Kara helped Alex keep a lid on the alien unrest, dodged Snapper, mad fruitless searches with Winn, and avoided doorways. She managed to keep spontaneous teleportations to a minimum, until the imp upped its game.

She and Alex were after something that looked like a bat and a rose bush had made a baby.
Apparently it had been terrorizing a grocery store, pulling down shelves and tearing open packages, and shooting its little thorn-things at anyone who got in its way. So far all the injuries had been minor, but the DEO didn’t want to take any chances.

“I hate it when they can fly,” Kara muttered into the comms, dodging around buildings and trying to follow the nightmare as it fled across the city.

“They probably feel the same way about you,” Alex pointed out. “Just keep it in sight, we’re going to try to set up an ambush.”

The bat-bush thing dropped abruptly, angling down and swooping through a tunnel under a bridge.

“No you don’t,” Kara growled, following.

“Kara, don’t!” Alex saw the danger before she did, but the warning came too late.

Kara dove into the tunnel... and came out straight into Lena’s office, shooting through her window at top speed and crashing into her coffee table.

“Kara?!”

Over the snapping of broken furniture, and the pounding of her own head, Kara wasn’t sure if it was Alex or Lena shouting at her. Probably both.

“Mama?”

That one, she knew.

Kara picked herself up, brushing off splinters of coffee table and bits of stuffing from the couch that had suffered collateral damage. She looked up to see Lena holding a struggling Lizzy up off the floor that had suddenly become a hazard for bare feet.

“Mama, ‘kay?”

“I’m fine,” Kara assured her. “Alex, do you have a visual?”

“Yes, but not for long. Where are you?”

“Slight detour, I’m on my way.” I’m sorry she mouthed at Lena, before taking off again, leaping through the open window... only to find herself turned around, and slamming back into the pile of ruined furniture.

“Oh, come on!” she shouted, pounding her fist into the floor and wincing at the resulting spiderweb of cracks.

Lena sighed, leaving Lizzy perched on her desk chair with strict instructions to stay, while she picked her way across the floor to kneel down next to Kara. She unhooked the communicator from her ear, holding it up to her lips.

“Alex?”

“Ms. Luthor.” Alex was less than surprised.

“Supergirl is having a little technical difficulty. I’ll send her your way as soon as I can get her untangled from the remains of my couch.
Kara thought she heard Alex choke back a laugh of equal parts disbelief and resignation. “We’d appreciate that.”

“Happy to help.”

Lena handed the communicator back to Kara, who replaced it with a wince. Her ears were definitely ringing now.

“Come on,” Lena said, offering her a hand up out of the wreckage. “I’ll walk you out.”

“Thanks,” Kara took her hand, letting Lena help her to her feet and lead her out onto the balcony. “I’m sorry about your office.”

“Don’t worry about it. Furniture can be replaced.”

“Still...” Kara hesitated.

“Go.” Lena gave her a little push. “But when you’re done,” she added more seriously. “We need to talk.”

Kara nodded, jumping back into the sky and speeding off to catch up with Alex.

It took four more hours, and a lot more firepower to finally get the alien into custody, and then Kara had to sit in the DEO med bay for another hour while Alex pulled out all of the thorns.

“Ow!” she grumbled, wincing as Alex yanked on a particularly deep one in her neck. “Do you have to be so rough?”

“Do you have to be so stupid?” Alex countered. “You were supposed to wait for the signal.”

“You were taking too long...” Kara muttered.

“You were distracted.” Alex pulled the last thorn free and dabbed on some antiseptic, not that Kara needed it. The wounds were closing up almost immediately, but she liked to be safe.

“Lena wants to talk,” Kara admitted. “I kind of trashed her office.”

“I heard.” Alex shook her head. “You have so much sucking up to do.”

“I know!” Kara buried her face in her hands. “Do you think she’ll ever speak to me again after this?”

“I’m sure she will,” Alex said. “But she’s put up with a lot, and we aren’t really making any progress. I wouldn’t blame her for being a little pissed.”

“Ugh...” Kara groaned, jumping down off the table. “Guess I have to go talk to her.”

“Yup.” Alex didn’t sound at all sympathetic. She clapped Kara on the shoulder. “Good luck.”

It was late when Kara finally landed on their balcony. Lizzy was already asleep; she could hear her slow and even breathing from the nursery. She found Lena at the table, a cup of coffee at her elbow, and the list of family rules in front of her.

Wordlessly, Lena turned it around so that Kara could read the latest addition.

Rule number four, “No more trying to stay away from each other.”
Faking It

Chapter Summary

Lena and Kara go to bed, Lizzy gets a time-out, James is jealous, and everyone needs to eat their vegetables

Chapter Notes

Here we go, not quite a weekly update, but much better than the last gap ;)

Thanks to everyone for the comments and kudos on chapter 8! I think it was the most responded-to chapter so far ;)

This chapter was originally going to have a lot more action, but Lena insisted on dragging out the first two scenes, so the action will kick off in chapter 10. Hopefully this won’t feel like too much of a filler-chapter...

Enjoy!

Rule number four, “No more trying to stay away from each other.”

Lena was expecting more of a fight.

Instead Kara just said “okay,” and picked up the list, complete with the latest addition, and put it back up on the fridge.

And that was that.

Lena wasn’t quite sure whether to consider it a win or a loss. On the one hand, she’d gotten her way, and that was always a plus. The random crashing into her office should stop, Supergirl could go back to protecting the city without interruption and Kara could focus on actually fixing their problem instead of driving all three of them crazy.

On the other, Lena hated to concede defeat, and there was no denying that’s what this was. She could only hope it was a battle they’d lost and not the war.

Of course, she would also be spending a lot more time with Kara, which was... well, more appealing than it should have been. Right now, she had a firm grip on her feelings. She was determined to keep them under control. If she could ever really have this; a partner, a home, and a child, she wanted it to be real. A choice she and the other applicable party had made for themselves, and not something forced on them by the whim of some interdimensional match-maker.

But with Kara right in front of her...

It wasn’t unlike the Stanford Marshmallow Experiment, or the cookie modification of it she had tried with Lizzy.
One now, or two later.

Predictably, Lizzy had lasted about thirty seconds, and while Lena could hope she had a little more self control than a sugar-obsessed toddler, she wasn’t looking forward to testing it.

All of which meant going to bed together was a brand new form of torture.

They’d been waking up together for long enough that it was almost familiar, but this was different, more intimate. Lena wasn’t sure if that was because they were both awake and aware of what they were doing, or if it was simply that getting in to bed with someone else was inherently more suggestive than getting out of it again.

Somehow faces got washed, teeth got brushed, and alarms were set, and Lena slipped into the bathroom to change into a pair of soft cotton shorts and a camisole. A quick search of her dresser hadn’t revealed much in the way of acceptable sleep wear. Acceptable for this anyway. There was plenty of silk and lace that suggested her married self enjoyed putting on a bit of a show, but Lena couldn’t quite imagine wearing any of it under the current circumstances.

Or rather she shouldn’t imagine wearing it. Though picturing Kara’s reaction if she did...

No.

Lena had firmly closed the drawer on that mental image.

Kara herself seemed comfortable in a worn-looking t-shirt and a pair of red pyjama pants with little yellow lightning bolts all over them. Lena allowed herself to wonder, just for a moment, if Kara had passed over any more, um... interesting clothing choices herself, but only for a moment. The idea of Kara and lace existing together in the same space was far more than one cookie’s worth of temptation.

Still, even like this, Kara was nothing short of adorable. Blond curls loose around her shoulders, fingers twisted in the hem of her shirt, and glasses slipping down her nose as she hovered – figuratively, that is- Lena was going to have to learn to differentiate, beside the bed.

Apparently she wasn’t the only one who was nervous about this.

“Kara,” she said, “If you’re not comfortable...”

“No!” Kara insisted hurriedly, pushing her glasses back up. “It’s fine. I’m fine.” She hesitated. “Are you fine?”

“I’m fine,” Lena assured her, inwardly cringing at the inanity of this conversation. They were grown women damn it.

“Oh,” Kara said. She visibly steeled herself, no small feat for the girl already made of steel, and pulled back the covers; getting into bed like she had a point to make.

Not about to be outdone, Lena switched off the light and joined her, keeping carefully to her own side as she slid under the blankets.

There.

They were in bed.

Now if only it was a little less awkward.
Kara was laying on her back, covers pulled up to her chest and her hands laid carefully on top, determinedly not fidgeting, though Lena suspected it was taking a great deal of effort on her part to keep still. Lena forced herself to relax, curling loosely on her side facing Kara.

“You forgot something,” she pointed out.

Kara blinked, shifting a little to look at Lena. “I...what?”

Catching her lower lip between her teeth, Lena reached out and tugged Kara’s glasses off, folding them neatly before handing them back.

“Oh,” Kara blushed, though Lena had no idea why. “Thanks.” She turned the glasses over in her hands. “How...” she started, and then stalled, sneaking a glance at Lena, as if unsure if this was a good time.

Curious, Lena gestured for her to continue.

“How did you figure it out?” Kara asked, tapping the rim of the glasses.

Lena raised a brow “That you were Supergirl?”

Kara nodded.

“Well, like I said; the disguise is a little lacking,” Lena said, stealing the glasses back and sliding them on over her own nose. “See?”

Kara mock-gasped. “Who are you, and what have you done with Lena?”

Lena rolled her eyes. “Very funny.” She started to take them off, but Kara stopped her, fingers warm on her wrist.

“Don’t. They suit you.”

“Oh?” Lena asked, archly. That was interesting.

Kara blushed again, but shrugged as if it was no big deal. “You didn’t really answer my question,” she said. “Glasses and a ponytail might not be much, but they work on most people.”

“I’m not most people.”

“I know that,” Kara huffed.

“I suppose...” Lena thought back, she had been suspicious about Kara from the beginning, though she hadn’t been sure of what exactly. Caped heroics hadn’t been on the list until later. She tried to pin-point when exactly she had been sure, and couldn’t. One day Supergirl had been Supergirl, and Kara had been Kara, and then the next, they’d been the same. She’d blamed the glasses, and Kara’s inability to lie, but the truth was, she’d just known.

“You were you.” she finished lamely. “Until I met you...” she shook her head. “Let’s just say, there aren’t many people who would choose to believe in a Luthor, so the odds that I had suddenly found two...”

Kara frowned. “You are worth believing in, Lena. You know that, right?”

Lena looked down, unable to meet the intensity of Kara’s conviction with anything other than doubt, but fingers under her chin tipped her head back up.
“You are,” Kara said firmly, reclaiming her glasses. “I see you, Lena. Just like you saw me. You’re amazing.”

Oh this was so unfair... Lena bit back her first response. Something about undying love and devotion no doubt, she tried not to examine it too closely for fear the mortification might do permanent damage. “Hmmm...” she hummed instead, going for light, and flirty with just a hint of smolder thrown in. “I can see why I married you.”

It had the desired effect. Kara flushed and stuttered, and, most importantly, took her hands away, and stopped staring at her with those big blue eyes full of belief, and admiration, and everything Lena didn’t deserve, so that she could think properly.

“You did that on purpose,” Kara said sulkily, once Lena had finished laughing at her, her face half-buried in her pillow, and the pout clear in her voice.

“You make it too easy,” Lena pointed out.

Kara grumbled something about evil Luthors, and rolled away with a huff, all awkwardness forgotten.

“Good night, Supergirl,” Lena said, all sweet innocence.

There was silence, then a soft, “Good night, Lena.”

*****

Waking up was easier.

Even if Lena was the little spoon this time.

Kara grumbled a drowsy protest when she tried to escape, tangling her fingers in the hem of Lena’s camisole and pulling her closer. Lena closed her eyes at the warm brush of knuckles against the sensitive skin of her stomach and the puff of breath against the nape of her neck when Kara exhaled, settling deeper back into sleep.

Not. Fair.

A sharp elbow to the ribs and a reproachful “Kara...” earned her a few inches of space, and she managed to extricate herself without further loss of dignity, rubbing ruefully at her elbow as she swung her legs over the side of the bed.

That was definitely going to bruise.

She should make a new list: The perils of sleeping with a superhero.

The room was still dark, and Lena fumbled for her clothes, unwilling to turn the light on and risk waking Kara until she had managed to regain a little equilibrium. The nursery was also blessedly silent, so she tip-toed carefully through her morning routine before taking her coffee out to the balcony to lean out over the railing and watch the first glimmer of sunrise.

It really was a beautiful view.

Better than the one from her own apartment. Still, she missed it. She missed the quiet, and the solitude, the clean, sophisticated design she had spent weeks perfecting, with no one’s tastes to consider but her own. She missed bare surfaces and cupboards that stayed closed without the need
for childproof locks. She missed having her own bathroom, her own closet, her own bed.

She missed her life.

But that wasn’t the same as wanting it back.

“Lena?” Kara shuffled out onto the balcony, yawning and still in her pyjamas. She rubbed the last of the sleep out of her eyes, and squinted at the bright curve of the sun cresting over the horizon. “It’s still dark out…” she grumbled, almost accusingly.

“I have an early meeting,” Lena said truthfully, though it wasn’t quite so early that she couldn’t have waited for the sun. “Can you take Lizzy this morning?”

Kara nodded, tucking her hair back behind her ears. She’d forgotten her glasses, and her blue eyes were still a little vague and unfocused. “I have to get a progress report in to Snapper this afternoon, but I can finish it here.”

“No DEO business today?”

“Not so far. Winn said he’d check in later, and Alex and Maggie are looking into the attack from yesterday.”

“Oh.” Lena fell silent, swirling the last dregs of coffee in her cup, and telling herself it was ridiculous to feel nervous about this. “We should probably make plans then…”

“Plans?” Kara clearly wasn’t really awake yet.

“Rule number four,” Lena reminded her. “I’ll be free for lunch, if you and Lizzy would like to meet me at Lcorp before your deadline with Snapper. We could order in, or there’s a new Vegan place just down the street.”

Kara wrinkled her nose. “Please, no Kale.”

“No Chinese, pizza or potstickers either,” Lena countered before Kara could make any of her usual requests, hardening her heart against the predictable sad eyes of betrayal. “Not all of us were blessed with Super metabolisms. If we’re going to be making a habit of this, I need vegetables, preferably not fried, wrapped in dough or covered in cheese.”

“Pfft,” Kara crossed her arms. “You were way more fun before we got married.”

Oh really?

“Vegetables, Kara,” Lena insisted, unimpressed. She set her empty coffee cup on top of Kara’s crossed arms, forcing her to scramble to catch it before it fell, and stepped back inside. “Now be a darling and wash that for me,” she added, airily, picking up her purse and her keys and heading for the front door. “I have to get to work.”

“Hey!” Kara yelped, following her. “I am so not your housewife!”

“Of course not, dear.” Lena turned at the door and -without even thinking- tugged Kara closer by the collar of her shirt and pressed a brief kiss to her cheek. “Have a good day!” she called over her shoulder on her way out, enjoying a guilty thrill at the look of stunned confusion on Kara’s face before she closed the door.

*****
She was still thinking about it when she wrapped up her morning meeting a few hours later, and headed back to her office.

She was trying not to.

She really was.

But budget meetings were not the best of distractions, and with everyone being so agreeable lately, Lena didn’t even have the usual belligerence and obstinacy to liven things up. It wasn’t that she wanted her old Board back, but they were being so... cooperative. It was unnerving, and completely useless to her right now.

“Ms. Luthor.” Jess caught up with her on the way to her office, and followed her in. “I have those financial reports you asked for.” She handed over a stack of folders. “And you have Mr. Olsen on line one for you.”

“Thank you.” Lena put the files on her desk. “Oh, and Jess,” she added as she picked up her phone. “Kara is bringing Lizzy by for lunch at noon. Could you have something brought in please? Something healthy, but not too healthy, and hold my calls until one.”

“Of course, Ms. Luthor. Shall I have Noonan’s send up a few of Miss. Lizzy’s favourite cookies as well?”

Lena sighed. “If you must... I suppose you might as well add a treat in for Kara as well, or I’ll never hear the end of it.”

“And for yourself?”

Lena highly doubted Noonan’s had what she wanted right now. “Just lunch for me. Thank you, Jess.”

Jess saw herself out as Lena sat down and transferred James’ call. “Good morning, Mr. Olsen,” she said. “What can I do for you?”

“Hey, Lena.” James discarded formality immediately, sounding a little harried, but not unfriendly. “Do you know why I have an email asking me to confirm event plans for a joint Gala Fundraiser with Lcorp?”

For a moment, Lena had no idea what he was talking about, and then... Damn. She’d completely forgotten about the anniversary party. “Well, it would have been rude of me to finalize the plans without you,” she deflected smoothly. “I mean, It is my and Kara’s anniversary, but since Catco so generously offered to co-host, I thought you might like to be involved.”

Okay, so she might know that Kara and James had dated, and she might have a little lingering jealousy.

“Anniversary?” he asked dubiously, and with just a hint of condescension. “You do know you’re not actually married...”

Apparently so did James.

“Yes, I did get that memo. Unfortunately,” Lena continued sweetly, “the majority of National City seems to have missed it, and seeing how the proceeds from the Gala will be going to support At Risk LGBTQ+ youth, I’d hate to disappoint them.” She paused to let that sink in. “Do you think you’ll be able to look over the plans and get any notes back to my secretary today?”
James offered a grudging confirmation and Lena made the appropriate farewells, hanging up with a smile on her face.

A smile that faded when she realized one simple truth.

She was going to have to tell Kara about the Gala.

A Gala at which they were the guests of honour... or more accurately, their marriage and everything it symbolized was the guest of honour.

They were going to have to pretend to be a happily married couple. In front of everyone they knew and half of National City.

For an entire evening.

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“Come on, it’ll be fun!” Kara wheedled, entirely unsympathetic to Lena’s case for why they should cancel. She was sitting with Lena on the new couch, her lunch half-finished on the equally new coffee table. (The crack in the floor was still there, though Lena rather thought she might keep that.) Lizzy was currently under Lena’s desk in a time-out (The location had been her choice, Lena had suggested a chair,) for deliberately dumping her milk. Apparently the joy of watching it splash had been worth the consequences and now she was making fish-faces against the glass in protest. Complete with sound effects.

“And besides,” Kara continued, very deliberately not looking at their child, because if she did she would start laughing again. “You said it yourself; it’s for a great cause. Not to mention; our nosy friend clearly wants this to happen. Do you really think we’d be allowed to get out of it?”

Lena could just imagine the catastrophe if they tried.

“You make a good point,” she admitted, putting down her fork and setting her barely-touched lunch down beside Kara’s. “But this isn’t just a party. We’ll be representing Lcorp, and Catco, and the LGBTQ+ community. I” She hesitated. “This cause is important to me Kara. It would mean a lot, both personally and professionally to have Lcorp be seen to publicly support and celebrate gay marriage. But you’re not gay, and I don’t want you to feel obligated to pretend to be something you’re not.”

“Hey,” Kara reached over and took her hand. “We’re in this together, right? You’re not asking me to do anything you wouldn’t do.”

“Yes, but Kara...” Lena took a breath. “I wouldn’t be pretending. Not about... that.”

Kara’s eyes widened. “Oh... Oh! So you like...”

“Both,” Lena confirmed.

“Huh...” Kara looked at her thoughtfully. “I think I knew that. I mean,” she amended. “I didn’t know, know of course, but I know you, so I think I knew that there was something to know, even if I didn’t know what I knew.”

Lena raised a brow, a smile tugging at the corner of her lips. “And now that you know, know? Are you...”
“Fine!” Kara hastened to assure her, all wild placating gestures. “All fine here. I mean, clearly you know about my sister, so of course I’m so fine with all of that. Um... so this party?”

Lena rolled her eyes, but allowed the subject change, however ungracefully it was done. “If you’re really comfortable... then I suppose we could try it,” she conceded.

“Yay!” Kara jumped up off the couch with a bounce. “I have to go and look over the plans with James. I organized all of Ms. Grant’s parties, but this is going to be way more fun!” She gathered up her bag and notebook, pausing to make an upside-down farewell fish face to Lizzy who replied by licking a stripe along the glass and leaving a wet smear; still resentful in her incarceration. “I’ll see you at home for dinner?”

Home... something in Lena’s chest tightened and ached, but she pasted on a smile and nodded. “I’m sure Jess will kick me out at five.”

“She’s a terror,” Kara agreed. “Bye!”

Then she was gone, in a flurry of pastel and party excitement and Lena dropped her head into her hands. This was going to be a disaster.

Not the party itself. She was fairly certain that would be a success.

But there was no way Lena was coming out of this unscathed.

“Mommy?” Lizzy knocked on the glass, big blue eyes repentant. “’Izzy out now?”

Lena nodded and held out her hands. Lizzy crawled out from under the desk and crossed the room to climb up into Lena’s lap, wrapping her arms around her neck, and pressing her spit-sticky little cheek up against Lena’s.

“Mommy sad?”

“A little,” Lena admitted, unwilling to inflict the long-standing Luthor tradition of pretending emotions didn’t exist on yet another generation.

Lizzy loosened her grip and sat back, expression solemn. “’Izzy hulp,” she promised seriously.

“I know, sweetheart.” Lena tucked back wild black curls, so much like Kara’s in the morning, behind her ears and pressed a kiss to her forehead. “Here...” she turned Lizzy around in her lap, and reached past her to push aside the remains of their lunch and pull her chess board closer across the coffee table. “My brother taught me how to play this game. Would you like to learn?”

Lizzy reached out and picked up the white knight, turning the little horse over in her hands. “’Nite?” she asked, holding it up for inspection.

“That’s a knight,” Lena told her. “They move in an L-shape, moving from black to white, or white to black squares to either attack or protect the other pieces.” She demonstrated with one of the other knights on the board.

“’Nite,” Lizzy echoed. “’Nite hulp? Nite ‘tect?”

“Sometimes,” Lena agreed, hugging her close and trying not to dwell on painful memories. “It depends on who’s playing the game. Now this one,” she continued, picking up another piece, “is a pawn...”
Making Progress

Chapter Summary

Lena gets a pleasant surprise, Kara gets a clue, Lizzy gets a spear, and Winn is a genius.

Chapter Notes

Yay! Back on the one-week schedule. :)

I had a lot of fun with this chapter, so I hope you all enjoy it!

There is a line in there that references a Supercorp tumblr post that I can't find now to credit... so if anyone catches it, and can point me in the right direction, I'll add a credit.

Also, I'm taking prompts on my tumblr, blackteaandbones.tumblr.com, just short little things for fun and writing practice. I'll be working on some of them in the next few days. :)

Kara was getting really, really tired of chasing aliens through National City.

Especially the flying ones.

First the bat-thorn- thing, which Winn had later identified as a Vespernam, and now a Kalvar. Not to mention all the other terrestrial ones they’d been rounding up. This one was humanoid, if you ignored the purple skin, feathered wings, and extremely sharp claws on its bird-like feet. Claws which Kara had already become intimately acquainted with. Her side still burned from three long gashes that had torn right through her supersuit and sliced deeply into her skin when Kara had made the mistake of getting too close trying to reason with it.

Alex was so going to yell at her for that one. Kara still wasn’t exactly clear on why getting injured was somehow always her fault, but Alex seemed to think it was.

Kalvar weren’t usually violent, but they were notorious thieves and smugglers. This one had been reported for skulking around in the same park Kara and Winn had been searching. Maggie’s Science division had investigated, and the Kalvar had put three officers in the hospital before fleeing.

Hence the chasing.

At least this time Kara didn’t have to worry about ducking under bridges. So far Lena’s plan seemed to be working, and she wasn’t being magically yanked around the city anymore.

“Winn,” Kara said, veering to the left at the last minute to avoid a building. “Has Maggie got the park cleared?”

At first there was no answer, and then a hurried, “Affirmative.” Winn sounded a little frazzled, but
his voice was clear through the comms. “You’re good to herd him back in that direction. I have back-up on the way if you need it.” There was a loud crash in the background followed by the rumble of angry voices.

“Winn...” Kara swooped back right and looped around the Kalvar, forcing it to bank and change direction. “Is everything okay?”

“Fine! Fine...” There was another thump, and a crash and then hissing and static and a muffled “No! That is not a toy!”

The Kalvar tried to dive to escape, and Kara dropped to block it, using her heat vision to singe a few feathers, and send it shooting back up in the right direction. “That doesn’t sound fine... maybe you should call Lena...”

“No, no,” Winn hurried to reassure her. “It’s okay... just a few minor accidents. I’m sure she didn’t mean to drop the priceless Hatorian artifact... or unplug all of the network hubs and disconnect the entire computer system...”

Kara winced. “I’m really sorry, Winn... Lena has back to back meetings, and then this Kalvar just had to pick today...” Speaking of which, they were flying back over the empty park and without the risk of civilian casualties, Kara put on an extra burst of super speed and closed with the purple alien, dropping down from above and forcing it to the ground. They crashed in a flurry of dirt, grass and feathers, the Kalvar hitting first and taking the brunt of the impact. Kara leapt clear, wary of flailing claws, but the Kalvar seemed to have had enough, and it stayed down, looking bruised and miserable and smelling of burnt feathers.

Satisfied, Kara gave Winn’s backup the all clear, and they moved in quickly to restrain and load the Kalvar into a waiting van. She stayed long enough to make sure the agents were playing nice with Maggie’s team, and then leapt back into the sky and headed for the DEO, hoping to find it still more or less in one piece.

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“You put her in a cell!”

“Okay,” Winn said, almost running to keep up with Kara as she stormed down the hallway towards the holding cells. “I can see how that might sound bad, like, really bad, but I swear it was for her own protection. I don’t know how she got hold of a Vrangian spear, but she nearly impaled Agent Vasquez with it, and then she bit Mon El...”

Kara stopped so suddenly that Winn nearly ran into her, skidding to a halt at the last second. “She bit him?” Kara demanded, turning around. “Why?”

“Uhh... he tried to take her spear away...?” Winn said, with an implied Duh tacked on. As if it was obvious. “He’s in medical.”

Kara closed her eyes and asked Rao for patience. “Which cell is she in?”

“Um, this way...” Winn edged around her and led the way to the minimum security cells.

“How did you even get her into a cell, if-“ Kara trailed off as they rounded the corner and Lizzy came into view, sitting cross-legged in the middle of her cell, and happily working her way through the entire bag of Oreo cookies that had clearly been used to lure her into captivity. “Oh.”
Lizzy looked up when she heard them coming, and her eyes widened in the universal *oh shit* expression when she saw her Mama, with the cape, and the boots, and a frown that promised the time out of all time outs.

“She still has the spear!” Kara rounded on Winn, hands on her hips.

“Yeah...So, Mon El might need stitches.” Winn pointed out. “*Mon El. Of Daxam.* I know he’s not Kryptonian levels of invulnerable, but he’s still pretty tough. I wasn’t about to risk losing a finger.”

Kara gritted her teeth. “Open the door.”

Winn keyed in the code, and the clear barrier slid open.

Kara held out her hand. “Spear.”

Lower lip trembling, and looking every inch the repentant daughter, Lizzy pushed herself to her feet and trudged over, handing Kara the spear.

“Cookies.”

This was harder, and Lizzy hesitated, a single tear falling down one crumb-covered cheek, but Kara was immovable and eventually the now half-empty bag was also surrendered. Kara handed both to Winn and knelt down so that she and Lizzy were face to face.

“All right kiddo,” she said. “Do you see this?” she tapped the symbol on her chest and waited for Lizzy’s teary nod. “This is our family crest, and it means a lot of things you’re too young to appreciate right now, but mostly it means that we help people. We *protect* people, we don’t hurt them. I know Mon El made you mad, but that doesn’t mean it was okay to bite him. Do you understand?”

“‘Izzy ‘tect?”

Kara nodded. “That’s right. No more biting, okay? Not unless you’re in danger, or someone else is in danger.”

Lizzy nodded again, wiping tears and cookie crumbs from her cheeks with both hands. Kara scooped her up and balanced her on one hip. “Now, apologize to Winn.”


That was apparently enough to melt Winn’s already soft heart. “It’s okay, kiddo,” he said, tucking the spear under one arm, and offering up a fist-bump that Lizzy returned, her tiny little hand dwarfed by his. “I’m pretty sure we’ve all wanted to bite Mon El at least once. And hey, weapons can be fun, but not advanced high-tech alien weapons, okay? Those are for Aunt Alex, because she’s a bad ass.”

“Badas?” Lizzy mimicked, and Kara sighed, glaring at Winn.

“Don’t encourage her,” she warned him. “And if she repeats that in front of Lena, I’m blaming you.”

“Have you considered a nanny?” Winn asked, following Kara back to the control room. “Not that I mind helping out, but clearly Mon El and I are out of our league here, and Alex and J’onn have been running themselves ragged. Right now they’re dealing with a Branx at the Zoo, and before that there was a Ramien, and a Galloron...”

“I’ve thought about it,” Kara admitted. “But where are we going to find a nanny that can handle a
half-Kryptonian toddler with a taste for larceny, mayhem and bloodshed and an irresponsible addiction to cookies, who tires me out on a good day?”

Winn shrugged. “Lena seems to manage.”

“Lena is clearly magical,” Kara pointed out. “And there’s only one of her.”

“True,” Winn admitted, sitting back down in his chair and spinning to face his computer. “In other news, I think I might have figured out what’s got our Alien population’s collective tail in a twist.”

“That at least, is good news.” Kara took the seat beside him, keeping a firm grip on Lizzy.

“Okay, so here...” Winn pulled up a map of National City. “Are the eight sites we’ve been searching for what we think are pieces of a talisman.” He pointed to the eight bright dots. “We have a park, a restaurant, a supermarket, the Natural History Museum, an art supply store, a public library, a School, and the National City Zoo. And here...” He pulled up a second map. “Are all the sites of unusual Alien activity in the last week.”

Kara frowned, there were a few points of overlap but, “they don’t match...”

“Nope,” Winn agreed. “But if you cross match the second map with all of the parks, restaurants, supermarkets, and so on in National City...” He clicked a few buttons and brought up a third map.

“Oh!” Kara saw what he was getting at immediately.

“I know, right?” Winn was clearly pleased with himself. “They don’t know where exactly to look, but somehow they know what kinds of places to look in. Don’t ask me how, I have no idea, but we are definitely not the only ones interested in finding this thing.”

“Which means we have to find it first,” Kara said. “If this really is Mxyzptlk’s Talisman, we can’t let anyone else get their hands on it.”

“Right there with you.”

“Okay, but we’ve already searched all of these places. And we haven’t found anything. So unless you’ve got some new ideas...”

“Well...” Winn looked both smug and shifty. “I might have something. But you’re not going to like it...”

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“I can’t believe you agreed to this.”

“It’s just dinner,” Lena said, following Kara into the small family diner, Lizzy clinging to one of each of their hands. “If Winn’s right, eating here is no more dangerous than any other restaurant in National City right now, and besides...” she smirked, and leaned closer, adding just loud enough for Kara to hear, “I have my own personal Supergirl to protect me.”

Kara staunchly ignored the little shiver down her spine elicited by the brush of Lena’s warm breath on her ear, and clung to the crumbling fragments of her argument. “What about Lizzy?”

Lena rolled her eyes. “Please. She took out half of your DEO’s communications, two trained agents, and a Daxamite this afternoon. Our daughter will be fine.”

A good point, Kara had to concede, though she was still mortified by Lizzy’s behaviour.
“Table for three?” A perky brunette asked as they stepped up to the counter.

“Please,” Lena said, ending the argument.

“Do you need a highchair?” The server asked as she led them through the dining room.

“Just a booster seat, will be fine, thank you.”

“No problem!” She showed them to a booth by a window, and left them with menus, bouncing off and coming back with a plastic booster seat for Lizzy. “Can I get you anything to drink?”

“Ice water, please,” Lena said, getting Lizzy settled and handing her a small wooden puzzle box to keep her busy. “And milk for this one.”

“Chocolate Strawberry Milkshake,” Kara added, cheering up immensely as she looked over the menu. “With whip cream, rainbow sprinkles, and a cherry on top, please!”

Lena sighed.

“Hey! Cherries are fruit,” Kara pointed out.

“I’ll add two,” their server offered with a wink. “And... I’m sorry, but you’re Lena Luthor, right?”

Kara could see Lena brace herself, her gracious, but icy, mask slipping into place. “That’s what my business cards say.”

“Oh, wow!” If anything the girl’s grin just got wider. “I’m majoring in business studies, and my girlfriend is in engineering. You’re like, our idol!”

Lena blinked, startled for a fraction of a second, before her professional smile warmed into something more real. “And you are...?” she asked, holding out a hand.

“Oh!” the girl juggled her pen and order pad, freeing a hand to shake Lena’s with the air of someone granted an unexpected wish. “I’m Annie. It’s such an honour to meet you! We read about your Gala Fundraiser in the paper a few weeks ago, and we’re just so excited to see someone like you trying to make a difference for people like us. Emily, that’s my girlfriend, her parents kicked her out when they found out she was gay, so knowing what you want to do for LGBTQ+ youth... You’re amazing!”

“The honour is mine. I’m just happy to be in a position to help.” Lena accepted the praise smoothly, but Kara could see that she was genuinely touched, and a little shaken as she took her hand back. “This is my wife, Kara Danvers, and our daughter Lizzy,” she continued, deflecting some of the attention off of herself with practiced ease. “Kara is a reporter with Catco Worldwide Media. They’re co-hosting the Gala next weekend.”

“I’m sorry, of course!” Flustered, Annie shook hands with Kara, and offered Lizzy a high-five, which she deigned to return. “It’s so great to meet you too! We’ve read all of your articles, and we’re pro-Alien Amnesty. The more the merrier, right? I know people have been grumbling lately, with all the... um... incidents, but a there’s bound to be a few trouble makers in any group. It’s not like humans are perfect.”

“Thank you,” Kara said, warming even more to this bubbly girl. “That’s... it’s nice to hear.”

“Your drinks!” Annie suddenly seemed to remember where she was and what she was supposed to be doing. “I’ll be right back!”
Lena pulled out her phone as soon as Annie was gone, holding up a hand when Kara asked who she was calling. “Jess? Hello. Sorry to bother you after hours, but I need two extra invitations reserved for the Gala. Annie and Emily. VIP treatment. Red Carpet. Throw in vouchers for hair and make-up, and that formal wear shop I like down on 4th. I want a car to pick them up, and take them home. Have everything delivered to Five D’s Diner on Main street. Yes, Annie works there. Thank you, Jess!” She hung up with a flourish, clearly pleased with herself.

“They’re going to name their first born after you,” Kara said with a grin, a little awestruck at how quickly and decisively Lena had acted.

“That’s the first time anyone has been excited to meet a Luthor since Lex went to jail,” Lena pointed out. “I’d have given her this restaurant if I thought she would accept it.”

“I was excited to meet you!” Kara protested.

“You thought I tried to blow up a spaceship.”

“Only for like, five minutes.”

Lena raised a brow. “Do you want a restaurant, Kara?”

“Not this one,” Kara admitted, looking around. “Now if you wanted to buy me a Chinese restaurant...” she added thoughtfully.

Lena picked up her phone again, and Kara scrambled to take it away from her, laughing.

“No, no, no! I was joking!”

Lena held her phone above her head, a coy smile on her lips. “And if I wanted to spoil you?”

Kara glanced around quickly to see if anyone was looking, and then used a surreptitious bit of super-speed to steal the phone too quickly for Lena to stop her, returning to her seat and placing it firmly face-down on the table in front of her. “No restaurants,” she said firmly. “And no cell phones during family dinner.” She opened her menu. “If you really want to spoil me,” she added, feeling a faint flush stain her cheeks as she looked it over. “You can buy me this triple chocolate brownie fudge sundae for dessert.”

Lena made a face.

“Without judging me.”

“Fine,” Lena acquiesced. “But you’re eating at least one serving of vegetables tonight.”

“Choc’lat?” Lizzy looked up from the knobs and sliders on her puzzle box, expression hopeful.

“You too,” Lena told her.

“And she didn’t think she’d make a good mother,” Kara grumbled in an aside to Lizzy as Lena perused the menu.

“I heard that.”

“Don’t worry,” Kara added, ignoring her. “We’ll get burgers. Lettuce, onions and pickles are vegetables.”

“F’ies?” Lizzy asked.
“And fries,” Kara promised.

Annie returned with their drinks before Lena could protest, and they put in their orders, Lizzy adding “‘Izzy, fies p’ease,” when Annie looked at her, pen poised. Lena asked for a salad. Pointedly, Kara thought, but then she stole a few of Kara’s fries when their dinners arrived, which compromised her position somewhat.

Lena shared updates about some of Lcorps new projects while they ate. “I’ve been thinking about reaching out to the alien community, actually” she added. “Not for weapons of course,” she said hastily, before Kara could open her mouth to object. “But... maybe if we showed National City what else alien technology could offer; green fuel, more efficient farming, even medical equipment. I could offer positions as consultants to any aliens who were interested and set an example for other businesses that might be hesitating to hire alien employees, while giving Lcorp an edge over any competition who won’t... what?”

Was her mouth hanging open? Kara closed it with a snap. She just... Lena was... Kara could practically feel her heart trying to burst.

“Annie was right,” she said. “You are amazing.”

It was Lena’s turn to blush. She ducked her head, eyes on her salad. “It’s not much,” she objected. “But I’d like to undo a little of the damage my mother did.

Kara reached across the table and took Lena’s hand, tangling their fingers together. “It’s a lot,” she said. “Thank you.”

Lena looked up when Kara tugged on her hand, lower lip caught between her teeth, and green eyes full of... Kara wasn’t sure exactly what, but it made her heart pick up its pace, and her skin tingle where they touched. It was almost as if... But no, Lena didn’t think of her that way. And Kara didn’t... she was pretty sure she didn’t... oh Rao... what if she did? What if Lena did?

“Lena...” Kara began, having no idea what she was going to say, but unable to resist the urge to say something, but she didn’t get the chance.

“How is everything going over here?” Annie’s bright and cheerful voice interrupted the moment, whatever it was.

“Wonderful,” Lena assured her immediately, still a little flushed. “I think these two are ready for dessert though.”

Kara allowed herself to be distracted by the prospect of chocolate, fudge and ice cream, but she kept a hold of Lena’s hand. There was something here she needed to figure out, and soon... before they found all the pieces of the talisman and she lost her chance. Something told her that if she just let things go back to the way they were before, she’d never know what this was, or if it was really something she wanted.

It wasn’t long before Annie returned with the sundaes, a large for Kara, and a smaller version in a little bowl for Lizzy with a plastic child’s spoon. Kara’s came with a knife and fork, which surprised her until she saw the size of the brownie underneath the ice cream.

She must have looked overwhelmed, because Lena chuckled at her, and released her hand so that she could tackle it properly.

“No judgement,” Kara reminded her, and Lena mimed buttoning her lips, turning instead to wrestle Lizzy into a bib.
Lizzy looked at her own dessert, and then at Kara’s, lower lip sticking out. She stretched out a hand, and Kara snatched her bowl back out of reach. “Not a chance, you little-“

“Kara, look!” Lena interrupted, eyes wide.

Kara looked down. Lizzy wasn’t trying to steal her dessert, she was reaching for the knife.

Which was glowing blue...

The same blue as Lizzy’s fingers...

Damn Winn.

Lena snatched Lizzy’s hand back, and Kara tucked the knife into her purse, cutting off the flickering blue light show. They both held their breaths, glancing around quickly, but no one seemed to have noticed.

Relieved, their eyes met over the table.

One down. Seven to go.

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Chapter End Notes

If anyone has any suggestions for a Nanny for Lizzy, let me know in the comments. :)
Telling Winn

Chapter Summary

Kara has an awkward conversation, Lena plays nurse, Lizzy is a manipulative little wretch, and Winn is channeling the audience.

Chapter Notes

I had a light work-week, so here, have Chapter 11 ahead of schedule! :)

Thank you all for all the nanny suggestions! The top picks are M’gann and Eliza, (Cat and Wonder Woman were close, but I don’t think I can fit them into the fic as-is) and I’ll make the decision before chapter 12, so feel free to weigh in!

M’gann is amazing, and a total bad ass, as we all know, but Eliza would come with In-Law shenanigans... so I'm torn.

Enjoy!

They parted ways after dinner, Lena taking Lizzy home to bed, and Kara flying over to the DEO to turn the knife over to Winn for testing and storage until they could find the other seven pieces of the talisman. She stayed to get the results, satisfied when he confirmed that the energy it was emitting was definitely fifth dimensional in origins, though he had no idea why it was manifesting as an innocuous looking table knife.

“Some kind of cloaking mechanism?” Kara asked.

Winn shrugged. “Maybe. Or maybe it’s not pieces of a talisman we’re looking for at all. Maybe these things have just been contaminated.” He yawned, rubbing his hands over his face. Everyone had been pulling double-duty lately, on top of unscheduled babysitting, and it was starting to show. “I won’t know anything more until we find the rest of them, whatever they might be.”

“We’re going to the supermarket tomorrow,” Kara said. “Hopefully we’ll find the next one there.”

“You still mad at me for getting Lena and the kid involved?”

Kara sighed and dropped into the chair beside him, using the toe of her boot to spin gently from side to side. “No.” She wasn’t, not really. “You were right. I’m not going to find these things by myself, and I don’t know if it’s just Lizzy, or all three of us, but that knife found us, not the other way around. I just... I don’t want them to get hurt.”

“Yeah, I get that.” He glanced over at her. “Are you okay, though? You seem... you’re not quite yourself.”

Ironic. Considering her life wasn’t quite her life, and yet... it felt more like her life than her life did, if that made any sense. “Have you ever...” Kara frowned, worrying at a small tear in the cuff of her

“Ever what?” Winn encouraged her.

Ugh... she had no idea how to ask this. “Have you ever...” she braced herself, “did you ever think you might like someone you wouldn’t have thought you could like?”

“Umm...” Winn looked confused. “Yeah, you’re gonna have to give me a bit more than that. Like who? Like someone like Siobhan? Because she was not my usual type.”

Kara kept her opinion on that one to herself. “Not like Siobhan, like... a guy?”

“Oh!” Winn’s eyebrows nearly made it all the way up his forehead into his hairline. “Huh.” He blew out a breath and leaned back in his chair. “Umm... sure, I guess. I mean, I think most people have at least that one person they’d go there for. For me, it’s, uh...” he trailed off.

Kara made a face. “Please tell me you’re not talking about my cousin?”

Winn’s guilty face said it all.

“Rao,” Kara threw her head back over the top of the chair. “I did not need to know that.”

“You asked!”

“I did,” Kara admitted, nose still scrunched up in distaste. What was it about Kal? Seriously? He was such a dork. “So does that make you bisexual, then?” she asked.

“I don’t think so,” Winn said. “I mean, I guess, technically. But if we’re looking at it like a spectrum, I’d say I’m 95% into girls, and maybe 5% into really hot, really strong guys that can fly, or you know, leap really high.”

“Not Mon El too!? Gross, Winn!”

“You’re the one who slept with him!” Winn pointed out, all wounded dignity.

“Don’t remind me.” Kara grumbled. She still hadn’t talked to Mon El about that... not that she wanted to, ever, but she should probably make sure he knew exactly how over it was. Especially if she cut that thought off. One thing at a time. “So... you’re saying, being attracted to one person doesn’t mean you have to completely re-examine your sexuality?”

Winn shrugged. “I guess not. Though, I think it depends...”

“On what?”

“Is it just a fantasy? Or is it serious?”

“Serious being...?”

“Dating, meeting the parents, renting a Uhaul,” He paused, eyeing her sidelong, “...raising a magical kid together while you pretend not to be falling in love with each other...”

He shrugged when she gaped at him. “Just a thought.”

“Winn!”

“Kara,” he mimicked. “Come on, this line of questioning? Not exactly subtle, even for you.”
“I can be subtle,” Kara muttered.

Winn scoffed.

Kara let it go, dropping her head into her hands with a muffled, “What if it is?”

“How?”

She raised her head to glare at him. “Serious! Winn.”

“Oh.” Winn looked surprised, like he hadn’t expected it to be that easy. “I guess that’s up to you.”

“Well,” Winn spun his chair to face Kara’s, taking her hands, and looking and sounding very earnest. “You have to look deep inside, and ask yourself...” He leaned in, sincerity all over his face. “Do you like her, or do you like her.” He nearly kept a straight face all the way through, only breaking into a snicker half-way through the second like.

Kara yanked her hands away, snatched up one of the action figures off his desk and threw it at him. Gently.

“I don’t know why I even asked you!”

Winn just laughed harder, almost doubling over in his chair. Kara crossed her arms and waited until he caught his breath.

“Because,” he wheezed. “There’s no way you were asking Alex, and can you imagine James’ face?”

Kara had to give him that one. Reluctantly.

“Yeah, well. It probably doesn’t matter anyway.” She kicked idly at the desk. “It’s not like she thinks about me that way.”

Winn nearly choked on another spate of laughter, sobering only when Kara just sank lower into her chair. “ Seriously?” he gasped. “Oh, come on, you are not that oblivious...”

She shrugged.

“Kara...” All traces of humour gone, Winn just shook his head. “Take it from someone who knows what being in love with you looks like. That girl has it bad.”

He was wrong.

Kara was pretty sure he was wrong.

He was probably wrong...

But, what if he wasn’t?

Kara pushed that question aside for later. It was time to go and find Mon El. They needed to talk.

According to Winn he wasn’t working tonight, but he was probably still at the bar, so she tried there first, trading the cape for khakis and a button-up and twisting her hair up into a knot. She was pretty sure most of M’gann’s clientele already knew who she was, but just in case...
Winn was right, and she found Mon El sitting at a table in the corner with a full glass and a deck of cards.

“Solitaire?” She asked, sliding into the booth across from him.

“Winn’s been teaching me Earth games,” he said, laying a six down on a seven. “I like Poker better, but apparently I don’t have the face for it.”

“I always liked Go Fish.”

“You need at least two for that,” he pointed out.

“Right...” Kara trailed off, not quite sure how to take this conversation from card games to their relationship status.

Mon El finished the deck and flipped it over, looking up instead of drawing another card. “Why are you here, Kara?”

That worked. “I wanted to talk to you.”

He snorted. “Yeah, I figured. Any reason you waited this long?”

“I wasn’t sure what to say,” Kara admitted, “and I haven’t had a lot of time.”

“That’s right,” he said. “You have your big happy family now. What do I matter?”

“Don’t.” Kara let a little steel creep into her voice. “You may not be a hero, or even half-way decent most of the time, but I know you’re not a complete jerk so stop acting like one.”

Mon El sneered, but it was weak and Kara sensed it was directed more at himself than at her. “If you’re so sure of that, why did you wish for her and not me?”

“I didn’t wish for anyone,” Kara said. “At least not that I can remember, but if I had?” She shook her head. “There might be good in you, Mon El, but that doesn’t make you a good person, or make us a good match. I’m raising a child now. I don’t want to be dating one too.”

“Fair enough” he said, his expression neutral as he closed his hand around next card, crumpling it into a ball and laying his fist flat on the table. “Is that all?”

“No.” Kara reached out and covered his hand with hers. “I’m sorry” she said, willing him to understand, just this once. “I didn’t mean to hurt you. I never should have let either of us think this could work. I was lonely, and scared. I missed my planet, and my people, and you were the only one who had any idea what that was like. I saw you as a chance to fulfill my Mother’s mission for me, and I tried so hard to make you into something you’re not just so I didn’t have to be alone anymore. That wasn’t fair. Not to you, and not to me.

“You could be so much more than this Mon El, but if you do it for me, or anyone else other than yourself it won’t mean anything. It won’t be real.”

“Real...?” Mon El scoffed. “That kid isn’t real, and neither is your so-called marriage. You think you were fooling yourself with me? What exactly are you doing with them?”

Kara refused to rise to the bait. “I’m figuring out who I am,” she said, taking her hand back and standing up. “Good bye, Mon El.”

He acknowledged her words with a jerk of his chin, unclenching his fist and smoothing out the
Kara left him there and headed home, leaping back into the sky and letting the rush of the wind wash the unpleasantness of the conversation out of her mind. She felt lighter, cleansed, and finally ready to be honest with herself.

The bedroom light was still on when she touched down on the balcony.

*Their* bedroom light.

*My wife,* Lena had said. She could have just introduced Kara by name. If Annie idolized Lena Luthor as an icon of the gay community as well as a CEO then she already knew who Kara Danvers was, but Lena had said *my wife.*

It probably didn’t mean anything to Lena, but just thinking about it now made Kara’s heart beat faster and her stomach swoop as if she was still flying. She was so completely and totally busted.

But that didn’t mean Winn was right.

About *her,* yeah.

But not about Lena.

“Kara?” Lena looked up from the book she was reading in bed when Kara opened the door, the tips of her fingers automatically skimming down the page to hold her place as she folded the cover over. “What did Winn say?” she asked, sitting up and crossing her legs under the covers.

Oh Winn had said *plenty.* Most of which Kara had no intentions of repeating. Not yet anyway... not until she was sure. “It’s fifth dimensional,” Kara confirmed, one hand still on the doorknob. She was a little afraid to enter the circle of light thrown by Lena’s bedside lamp. As if Lena might be able to read the thoughts on her face as easily as the book in her hands. “He’ll know more once we have them all.”

“That’s good, right?” Lena tucked a bookmark into her novel and set it on the bedside table. “We’re on the right track?”

Kara nodded. “Winn thinks so.”

Lena frowned, her brow furrowing when Kara continued to linger in the doorway. “Are *you* okay? Did anything happen?”

Yes “No,” Kara lied, reluctantly stepping into the room and closing the door behind her. Feigning a yawn, she edged towards the on suite. “I’m just tired.”

Lena didn’t look convinced, but she let it go, and Kara dawdled through her bedtime routine, half-hoping Lena would be asleep by the time she had to get into bed, but no such luck.

“What is *that*?” Lena demanded sharply when Kara emerged.

“What is what?” Kara was genuinely confused until she followed Lena’s gaze to her middle, where the shirt she’d grabbed in her rush to get into the bathroom, didn’t *quite* cover the bandages Alex had insisted on putting over her claw marks. “Oh,” she said, tugging the hem down over the tape and gauze. “That’s nothing... just a scratch.”

“You’re not supposed to *get* scratches,” Lena objected, slipping out of bed to snag Kara’s wrist and
tug her closer. She settled back on the edge of the bed, pulling Kara to stand awkwardly between her knees, so she could push the fabric out of the way. “There’s blood.”

“Dried blood,” Kara protested, trying to squirm away from Lena’s hands on her skin. “It’s almost healed, really.”

Lena ignored her, already peeling away the tape. “Then this should be changed. What happened? I thought you were invulnerable.”

“Nearly invulnerable,” Kara clarified, giving up and holding the edge of her shirt up as directed so that Lena could lift the gauze and inspect her wounds. “There are some aliens who can hurt me, though I guess it’s weird that so many of them have been showing up lately, and there are some non-earth elements too. Oh, and I can’t be burned, but I can be electrocuted,” Kara continued, hoping that if she just kept talking she could pretend not to notice the way the slight roughness of Lena’s finger tips lingered around the edges of her claw marks. “If the voltage is high enough it could kill me-”

“And here I thought you had only one weakness...” Lena interrupted, pulling the last of the bandaging away. Her tone was light, but there was genuine worry underneath the teasing.

“Oh, no,” Kara babbled on, resisting the urge to add beautiful women with green eyes who looked up at her through their lashes like... to the list. “I have lots.”

“Hmm...” Lena pushed Kara back slightly, rising and taking the old bandages to the bathroom to throw them out. She rummaged briefly through the cupboards before coming back with a first aid kit. “Are you sure you should be entrusting all your secrets to a Luthor?” she asked, a wry tilt to the edge of her lips as she sat back down, inviting Kara to find the humour in the situation.

Not all her secrets... “I trust you,” Kara said, answering Lena’s playfulness with gravity. She held her gaze when Lena pulled her back in, hands tugging on her hips, turning her slightly, so that she could carefully clean and then spread antiseptic cream over the half-healed scratches.

She didn’t need it. There were no bacteria on this planet that could infect her so long as she had her powers, but she let Lena do it anyway. She also let her tape on a fresh layer of gauze overtop, pressing gently, but firmly on the edges until it was sealed, all the way around. She let her untangle the hem of her shirt from her fingers and pull it back down into place, and then she let her urge her into bed, shuffling backwards across the covers and drawing Kara in after her.

She let Lena tuck her in, and she said nothing when Lena curled up close beside her, not quite touching, except for one hand that she laid softly on in the dip between Kara’s hip and her ribs, long fingers spread protectively over the hidden bandages.

“Thank you,” Lena said quietly, once they were settled. Though if it was for her cooperation, or her faith, Kara couldn’t tell.

Maybe it was both.

*****

Lena needed two cups of coffee the next morning.

It wasn’t just the lost sleep, though there hadn’t been many hours of the night left by the time Kara had gotten home. It was also the unexpected reminder that Kara might be a nearly indestructible superhero, but she was also mortal.
Lena knew, she knew the wounds had been superficial. That wasn’t the point. Kara had been injured, and Lena had very quietly, and very calmly, freaked the fuck out. She was grateful that Kara had indulged her, because she wasn’t sure quite how she would have handled it if she hadn’t.

And then... Lena was so used to waking up snuggled together by now, that she hadn’t really thought about it when they’d gone to sleep already touching, but apparently that had been some kind of signal to her subconscious, because she’d woken up curled so closely against Kara’s back that she could feel her breathing, one thigh tucked up between hers, a bare shoulder under her mouth where Kara’s shirt had slipped to the side, and the hand that had been on Kara’s waist having migrated up to rest over her heart. She had felt the steady beat under her palm suddenly quicken as Kara had awoken. With her shirt pushed up, and Lena’s knee where it was... It was easily the most suggestive position they’d found themselves in since that first morning.

She’d tried to pull away, but Kara had caught the hand against her chest and pressed, letting Lena feel the way her heart was pounding.

She was just trying to tell Lena it was okay, obviously, letting her know that she didn’t have to feel uncomfortable or run away. Still, for a moment it had felt like something more... but there were imperious toddlers feed and dress, and a talisman to find, and Lena’s alarm was going off, and in the scramble to get ready to go, she convinced herself she’d imagined it.

It was a lot to ask a single extra cup of coffee to cover, but Lena was tough, she could handle the rest. At least it was Saturday, and she could leave the heels and tight skirts at home, choosing instead perfectly tailored, but comfortable jeans and a cropped jacket over a silk shirt and flat shoes.

By the time they made it to the supermarket, Lena felt almost normal, though the occasional sidelong look she’d caught from Kara, suggested she hadn’t been faking it particularly well up to that point.

Lizzy was... Lizzy. Which meant once they were in the store, Lena couldn’t take her eyes off of her for a second. Or Kara for that matter. They had started off with two carts, but Lena quickly vetoed the second one when it became clear that between the two of them, Kara and Lizzy would have filled it entirely with junk.

“I need the calories, Lena!” Kara pouted, when Lena made her put half the pop tarts back.

“At least eat actual fruit instead of fruit-flavoured goo.”

Kara sighed. “You don’t understand, the goo is the best part!”

“I thought it was the frosting.”

“That too.”

“Where’s Lizzy?” Lena asked, looking around. Distracted by Kara’s lower lip she’d let her attention waver, and now, where their daughter had stood only a few seconds before there was nothing but a discarded pair of shoes.

“I’ve got this...” Kara discreetly slid her glasses down her nose, quickly scanning the supermarket. “Free samples,” she said, leading the way.

They found Lizzy’s socks at the end of the aisle, and the toddler herself standing on her tip-toes at one of the free samples tables, using her own, slightly scaled down, version of the Danver’s pout to get a second, or possibly third, helping. Kara scooped Lizzy up with one hand, and nabbed the toothpick with a little square of something that looked like cheesecake on it, in the other.
“I’m sorry if she was bothering you,” she said, giving the middle-aged woman behind the table her sunniest smile. “We’re still figuring out the whole family shopping thing.”

“Oh no, not at all! The woman hastened to reassure her. “She was so polite! All pleases, and thank yous.” This sentiment was echoed in neighboring tables. “And she’s just so adorable! Is she yours?” She added, looking between Kara and Lena.

*Naturally,* Lena thought. Teach the kid to say please, and she uses it to scam well meaning saleswomen. She’d be proud if she wasn’t so mortified.

“Guilty,” Kara admitted, including Lena in her widening grin. “She got her Mommy’s looks, but...” She bit the little cheesecake square off the toothpick, licking an errant crumb from the corner of her mouth and Mmm-ing happily. “She clearly got my taste in desserts. This is amazing.”

“Oh, thank you.” The woman beamed. “Here, have another!”

*Oh for the love of...*

Somehow Lizzy ended up with another one too, and then the whole row of salespeople were falling all over themselves to feed them, cooing over Lizzy, who was actually playing shy which somehow meant they tried harder, and complimenting Kara and Lena on their beautiful family.

“You are *both* shameless,” Lena whispered in Kara’s ear during a slight ebb in the attention, when their end of the samples aisle had carried Lizzy off to introduce her to the people at the other end. Did she imagine the slight shiver running down Kara’s spine at her words? Or was it just how close they were?

Instead of jumping away like Lena expected, Kara leaned back and tilted her head, her lips just barely brushing the corner of Lena’s jaw as she murmured playfully, “Uh-huh, you know you love us.”

This time it was Lena’s turn to flinch back, feeling her cheeks heat as Kara spun away, her grin turning impish, though Lena thought she saw a trace of nervousness there too. Was Kara...*flirting* with her?

On *purpose*?

“Mommy!” Given the shakiness of the moment, having Lizzy crash into her legs nearly knocked Lena off her feet. “Come, p’ease!” She tugged on Lena’s hand, dragging her back to the other end of the aisle and her new friends. Kara laughed, taking Lizzy’s other hand like this was all normal, and only gave Lena one slightly bashful look, before focusing back on their toddler.

Lena allowed herself to be carried along, meeting all of the salespeople and even trying a few samples, though she handed most of hers over to Kara, just to watch her tease them off the toothpicks with evident enjoyment, making enough of a show about it that Lena was *almost* sure it was intentional.

Eventually they had to give way to other customers, and there was still a talisman piece to find. Kara loaded the cart with their favourites of the samples, and they headed off to finish their shopping. Lizzy, now sated on both treats and attention was content to hold Lena’s hand and behave herself, so well in fact they almost missed their target.

Kara was arguing the merits of spaghettios, and Lena was trying not to laugh at how serious she was about it, when she felt a light tug on her hand. Not thinking, she tugged back, and Lizzy sighed and leaned against her leg.
“Hey lady?”

“Yes?” Lena looked away from Kara, sure that the instant her back was turned the cart would be full of the disgusting food, and refocused on a little boy a few years older than Lizzy, who was looking a little spooked.

“Your kid’s hands are glowing.”

“What? Oh!” Lena let go of Lizzy’s hand, and stepped back, watching to see where she would go.

Lizzy headed straight across the aisle and stretched up as far as she could reach to pull down a box of Macaroni and Cheese that began glowing with the same light as her hands as soon as she got within a few inches of it.

“That’s freaky,” the kid said, sounding kind of impressed. “She an alien?”

“Science experiment,” Kara offered, taking the box and handing Lizzy to Lena. “Top Secret.”

“Really?”

“Yup.”

“Cool!” He wandered off again, curiosity satisfied.

Kara looked at Lena. “I’d better get this to Winn...”

“Go,” Lena said. “And, Kara?”

“Yes?”

“We’re not buying eight cans of Spaghettios.”
Nearly There

Chapter Summary

Lena and Kara come to some uncomfortable realizations, Lizzy makes a new friend, James bows out, Winn gossips, and Alex is... well, you'll see.

Chapter Notes

I was going to wait until tomorrow morning and do final edits, and it might be the sleep deprivation talking here, but I'm pretty happy with this one. :)

Thank you, as always, to everyone who left comments and kudos. You're all amazing for taking the time, and I really appreciate it. I think there are a few comments I haven't replied to yet, but I will come back to you, it's just been a crazy week.

Oh, and the nanny decision has been made, look for that development in chapter 13. I had a lot of fun with all the suggestions... some of you have actually given me a future head-cannon ideas, but I'll keep those to myself for now... ;)

Enjoy!

Lena had never thought of herself as the kind of person who looked forward to the weekend. She loved her work. Lcorp wasn't just a job, it was family; the only remaining member of her family she had any hope of redeeming. But there was something special about Sunday mornings. Sunday morning was for waking up to sunlight instead of an alarm, tea instead of coffee, and the fresh crisp pages of a real newspaper under her fingers instead of her usual hurried swipe through the newest headlines on her phone.

This Sunday morning was different. Where other Sunday mornings had been just about Lena, this Sunday morning might have been about Lena and Kara, and maybe a little bit about exploring the limits of plausible deniability on just friends spooning... but when Lena woke up and automatically reached for the other woman, there was no one there.

She was alone.

Any lingering doubts Lena may have had about how little she actually wanted her old life back died a sudden and inevitable death in that moment.

It wasn’t the worst thirty seconds of her life, but it was close.

That was about how long it took her to realize she was overreacting. Nothing had changed. She was still in their bed, in their bedroom, in their apartment. The half-empty glass of water Kara had left on her bedside table last night was still there, and when Lena sat up she saw Kara’s pyjamas hanging over the side of the laundry basket. The only thing missing was Kara herself.
Okay...Lena took a deep breath, telling her frantically beating heart to calm the hell down, everything was fine. This was... just not something she’d really wanted to realize about herself today. She’d known of course, almost from the first day, that giving this up was going to hurt, but she’d never truly doubted that it was the right thing to do, or questioned her ability to do it.

Lena didn’t think she liked Sunday mornings anymore.

As the pounding of blood in her ears faded, she became aware of other sounds filtering through the walls of the apartment; Lizzy’s high pitched giggle, just this side of maniacal, and Kara’s warm, bright tones, rising and falling like a melody.

Like a moth drawn to its own immolation, Lena couldn’t resist their light, and she hated them a little bit for that, though not nearly as much as she hated herself.

“Good morning!” Kara called from the kitchen when Lena emerged; still in her sleep clothes, though she had taken five minutes to wash her face and brush her teeth and hair. Personal crisis or no personal crisis, she had standards.

“I was just about to come wake you up,” Kara added, grinning over the giant ceramic bowl she was stirring. She looked like she’d been up for hours; bright and bubbly in a simple belted sundress, pale blue under a white cardigan, and her hair done up in an elaborate crown of braids. There was a smear of what looked like pancake batter across her nose and more on the bridge of her glasses. She set the bowl down on the counter beside the stove, and started spooning it into a sizzling pan. “Your pancakes will be ready in about five minutes, the cooler is packed, I put Lizzy’s stroller and diaper bag by the front door, and she already has her sunscreen on. I have no idea if half-Kryptonians can get sunburned, but I didn’t really want to test it. Alex and Maggie are meeting us there, James too, but Winn needs a ride, so I said we’d pick him up on our way.” Leaving the pancake to cook, she took a plate with another one already cut up and drizzled with syrup, and put it in front of Lizzy in her booster seat at the table.

“’Chip cakes!” Lizzy exclaimed and dug in, barely sparing a glance for Lena in the presence of food. Specifically food containing chocolate chips. For which Lena would lecture Kara later, but right now...

“Where exactly are we going?” Lena asked. She remembered Kara saying something about pursuing another talisman piece today, but honestly, she’d been half asleep when Kara had flown in after a late-night assist with Detective Sawyer, and most of what she recalled was the twin gusts of air and enthusiasm as Kara super-sped through her nightly routine before collapsing beside her in bed.

“The Zoo!” Kara beamed. “Winn thinks that one is going to take the longest to search, so it made sense to tackle it on the weekend, and I was telling Maggie about it, and she thought it would make a great double date –she’s still hit or miss on remembering the reality shift—, and then I didn’t want Winn and James to feel left out, so...uh...” Her grin turned sheepish. “I, um... invited everyone? Coffee?”

“Please.” Lena sat down at the table, accepting the cup Kara offered gratefully. She took a moment just to breathe it in before taking her first sip, welcoming the bitter dose of caffeine on her tongue. Tea just wasn’t going to cut it this particular Sunday morning.

“’Cake, Mommy?” Lizzy offered, holding out her sticky fork with a squashed looking piece of pancake speared on the tines.

“Mommy gets her own breakfast,” Kara said firmly, redirecting Lizzy’s fork back to her plate. “You eat yours. I cut up some of the strawberries we bought yesterday too,” she added to Lena. “Are you
hungry now, or would you rather get ready first?”

She was even wearing an apron. With the words Trophy Wife printed across the chest in elaborate pink script.

Lena was feeling very attacked right now.

Kara must have misinterpreted her expression, because her face fell, excitement replaced by concern. “I guess I should have asked. Is that okay? Taking everyone? I can cancel...” she turned away and reached for her phone on the counter.

“No,” Lena caught the strings of her apron, tugging her back. “It’s fine. I just... didn’t sleep well,” she lied. “I’m sorry, I’d love to go to the Zoo with everyone.”

“Really?” Kara allowed herself to be pulled in, knees bumping into Lena’s chair.

“Really,” Lena assured her, and the terrible thing was; that part was true. “Nice apron,” she added, because how could she not? “Though are you sure it’s not mine?”

“Very sure,” Kara said, blue eyes twinkling with mirth. “Yours says Sugar Mama. I’m blaming Winn.”

Lena snorted and dropped her forehead against Kara’s middle to hide her blush, pulling her closer with an arm around her hips and fingers still tangled in her apron strings. “You have terrible friends.”

“I have awesome friends,” Kara corrected her. “You’re sure you’re okay?”

“I’m sure,” Lena said, her breath catching a little on the second word, when she felt the tentative brush of fingers through her hair.

“Because it’s okay if you’re not...” Kara’s touch became surer when Lena didn’t object, running from her temples, over her ears and down the back of her head, scraping lightly against her scalp and making her entire body hum.

“You’d better not be getting pancake batter in my hair,” Lena threatened, because yanking Kara down and kissing her wasn’t an option.

“Um...”

“Kara!”

“Only a little?”

Lena sighed, reluctantly letting go of her and sitting up. She resisted the urge to whimper when Kara’s hands fell out of her hair. Barely. “I needed a shower anyway.” A cold shower, she added silently.

“Better go then.” Was it just Lena’s imagination, or did Kara sound a little breathless as she stepped back, offering a hand to help her up.

Lena let her, if only for the added torture of feeling Kara’s hand in hers, and the barest hint of superhuman strength in the gentle tug it took to bring her to her feet. Of course, Kara neglected to move away, and they ended up standing way too close together.

“Your shower,” Kara reminded her, when they’d been staring at each other just a little too long to be considered strictly friendly.
“Your hand,” Lena countered.

“Oh,” Kara released her, blushing faintly and nearly tripping over the other chair as she retreated back towards the kitchen. “Sorry, I’ll just...”

“Rescue your burning pancake?”

“My...?” The smell of charred batter reached them seconds before the smoke detector went off. “Oh, no...” she dashed to the stove.

Lizzy covered her ears with a shriek at the loud wail of the alarm, smearing maple syrup all over herself in the process.

“No freeze-breath on the appliances,” Lena warned Kara before she could open her mouth, picking Lizzy up on her way past. They could both use a shower now. “Put it on the list. And no flying in the house either,” she added, when Kara defied gravity to turn off the smoke detector without the benefit of a step stool.

“We’re going to need more paper,” Kara grumbled, dropping back to the floor and putting the ruined pan in the sink before dutifully pulling the list of family rules down off the fridge to make the additions.

Lena left her to it with a shake of her head, and a rueful grin.

Maybe she still liked Sunday mornings after all.

*****

The Zoo was hot, crowded, loud and smelly, and Kara loved it.

Lizzy loved it too, if her squeals of joy, and near-constant babbling of barely recognizable animal names were anything to go by. The stroller had lasted about ten minutes before Kara had given in and let her walk. Two hours later, Winn was carrying the stroller, and James was carrying Lizzy up on his shoulders so that she could still see everything while her little legs recovered from the dead-run with which she had covered the first quarter of the park, dashing from animal to animal so quickly that only Kara had been able to keep up with her.

She had a tiny ice cream cone clutched in one chubby fist; currently occupying 95% of her attention, and the other hand firmly grasping James’ left ear. Kara wasn’t sure if his pained wince was for that, or for the steady drip of melting ice cream onto his head. Either way, he was getting serious uncle points.

“I’m sorry,” Kara said, dropping back to walk beside him as they left the Americas and took the next trail heading for the eastern regions. Alex and Maggie were sharing war stories up at the front of the group, and Lena and Winn were deep in discussion about her Alien tech project in the middle. “Do you want me to take her?”

“It’s okay,” James said, wiping ice cream out of his eyebrow. “I like kids, and she kind of grows on you... when she’s not destroying everything in sight.”

“You’ve been talking to Winn.”

“There was mention of an alien spear.” James chuckled. “I would have given a lot to see her bite that frat boy, though. I heard he needed stitches. What’s going on with that by the way? I would have thought he’d be here...”
Kara’s first instinct was to chide James for his attitude towards Mon El, but when she opened her mouth, nothing came out. She was done, she realized. She was done defending him. She still cared about him, and she still believed he had the potential to be a good person, but she wasn’t going to make excuses for him anymore. Mon El was going to have to stand up or fall down on his own from now on.

“I didn’t invite him,” Kara admitted. “It might have been a little weird...” She waved a hand at Lena, walking ahead of them.

“Ah...” James looked far too knowing for Kara’s tastes. “How is that going then? I noticed you guys are still wearing your wedding rings.”

Kara considered lying. It was bad enough that Winn knew, and James was... James. They had history. “It’s...” she caved. “It’s kind of amazing actually... but in a totally awful way? Like, I’m not sure if I even want to find this talisman anymore, because then it will be over, and I...” she twisted the ring in question on her finger, wondering how she would feel when it was gone, and not really liking the answer. “I don’t think I’m ready for it to be over.”

James frowned. “You know you can’t leave reality all messed up, Kara...”

“I Know!” Kara blew out a breath, not really angry with James for only pointing out the obvious, but still. Why did he always have to be so big picture all the time? It was only a tiny little kink in reality... just a few rings and one pretty awesome kid. There were literally millions of kids on the planet, what was one more?

“I’m sorry,” James said, and he sounded sincere, if a little sad. “You guys are... kind of cute together.”

“You think so?” Kara let her gaze slip from James to Lena; almost casual today in black capris pants and sandals with a sleeveless white blouse. She’d added a pair of sunglasses and twisted her hair up into a loose knot, rather than her usual more severe style. It made her look softer, somehow, and talking science with Winn... it lit her up inside.

As if sensing Kara’s eyes on her, Lena glanced back; catching Kara’s appreciative gaze and smirking. Kara ducked her head, blushing, and nearly tripped over her own feet.

“Yeah...” James chuckled, reaching out an arm to steady her before she fell and broke the pavement. “I really do.”

*****

Lena tried to refocus on Winn’s arguments for the development of self-defence tech, and why it was completely different from making weapons, resisting the giddy thrill that had shot through her when she’d caught a glimpse of that look in Kara’s eyes, but it was hard not to let her attention wander. Had she really seen what she thought she’d seen?

She’d suspected Kara was flirting with her in the grocery store yesterday, but she hadn’t really believed it. Kara was straight, right? Except she’d never actually confirmed that, now that Lena thought about it. Could she be wrong?

Hope, after no hope, was a cruel thing.

Winn trailed off, clearly noticing Lena’s sudden lack of focus. He glanced between her and Kara, a smug twinkle in his eye. “Something on your mind?” he asked. “Or should I say, someone?”
Lena breezed on past him, staring straight ahead. “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“Sure…” He caught up, gamboling like an overgrown puppy. “But just so you know, I’m Kara’s best friend.” He tapped the side of his nose. “I have the inside scoop.

Lena faltered, but only for a moment. She wasn’t going to stoop to gossip. She wasn’t that desperate. Not yet anyway. Though if Winn was offering… “What do you know?”

“Enough,” Winn said with a grin. “But let’s just say, someone was asking some pretty interesting questions the other day.”

Lena scowled at him. Sure, lure her in and then tell her nothing. “I have no idea what that means.”

“Neither does she,” Winn tilted his head back towards Kara. “But the point is, she’s asking.”

“She’s…Oh.” Lena blinked. Was he saying what she thought he was saying?

Winn nodded. “Exactly.”

Lena glanced back again, but Kara was helping James wipe melted ice cream off his head and didn’t notice. She laughed when Lizzy swung wildly to the right, craning her head to watch the antics of a monkey in a nearby enclosure and swiped her nearly finished, but still dripping, cone across his face.

“Argh…” he protested, nearly losing his grip on her feet.

“That’s enough of that,” Kara said, plucking the mangled treat free of Lizzy’s fist and tossing it into a nearby trashcan. Lizzy opened her mouth to yell, outraged at the injustice, but just then they rounded a corner, the path widening out at a new exhibit, and Lizzy forgot all about her ice cream.

“Kitty…” she breathed, frozen for one overwhelmed moment, before she was struggling to get down, nearly kicking James in the head in her excitement. “Big kitty!”

“Tiger,” Kara corrected her, reaching up to lift her down before she fell, or James lost an ear or an eye to flailing hands. As soon as Lizzy’s feet touched the ground she was off; a tiny streak through the crowd. Kara sighed and trotted after her, shooting Lena a wry what are we going to do with this kid? look over her shoulder that shouldn’t have melted Lena’s heart so completely, but when it came to Kara… she was pretty much always halfway to a puddle already.

*****

By the time Kara caught up to her, Lizzy was already plastered to the clear wall of the enclosure, face rapt with fascination. “Tiger…” she whispered, reverent. “Tiger, Mama!” She said, louder, pointing at the big cats lolling on their rocks, and scratching lazily at a fallen log, as if Kara hadn’t been the one to tell her what they were.

“I know, kiddo,” Kara said, crouching down beside her. “These are Amur, or Siberian tigers. They’re the biggest cats on Earth.”

“’Mur Tigers?”

“That’s right.” Kara couldn’t help the big, dopey grin on her face at Lizzy’s look of utter rapture. She remembered what her first trip to the Zoo had been like, back when she’d first come to earth. It had been a revelation. Animals had been a revelation. They’d had so few left on Krypton...

“Izzy tiger?”
“No.” Kara drew the line there. “You can’t have a tiger. They don’t make good pets.”

As if to demonstrate, one of the smaller males, probably bored, wandered over to pester the largest tiger who was currently sunning himself on top of their cave. He batted playfully at the older tiger’s face, jumping back when his efforts resulted in an annoyed growl, a show of teeth and a lazy swipe, long claws scraping against rock.

Far from being daunted, Lizzy bared her own teeth in a passable growl herself, crooking her fingers and drawing her nails down the plexi glass.

Ears pricked at this new contender, the small male glanced over at them. Lizzy growled again, and he bounded over, bouncing a little on his feet as if to show off, chuffing proudly. Lizzy giggled at his antics, completely unafraid, even when he pulled up right on the other side of the barrier and reared back, slamming his paws to either side of her.

“Tiger, down,” she said firmly, and Kara wasn’t sure who was more surprised, her or the tiger when he obeyed instantly, dropping his paws to the ground and crouching down until his big yellow eyes were level with Lizzy’s. “Nice tiger,” she praised him, stroking her hand against the plexi glass, as if it was his fur. “Izzy’s tiger.”

The tiger seemed inclined to agree, half-closing his eyes and licking his side of the barrier under Lizzy’s hand.

“Just to be clear, I don’t care if that tiger starts glowing blue. We’re not taking it home,” Lena said, coming up behind them, but she sounded more amused than annoyed.

Kara grinned up at her. “What about a kitten?”

“I don’t think a kitten would quite measure up after this,” Lena pointed out, watching as Lizzy walked along the barrier, trailing her hand against the plexi glass and her new conquest followed, padding slowly along beside her.

“You might be right,” Kara agreed, standing up. “What do you think our chances are of persuading her to move on any time soon?”

“Optimistically? Non-existent.”

Kara laughed. “Lunch? It looks like there’s a little food court down that way. We could have a picnic...” she trailed off, frowning at the rest of their group, still well back of the tiger enclosure, huddled in a suspicious looking little circle and taking turns to glance over at Kara and Lena every few seconds. Kara couldn’t be positive without using her super hearing, but she was pretty sure someone was snickering.

“Now, what are they up to?” Lena asked, echoing Kara’s thought and pushing her sunglasses up on top of her hair.

“I have a pretty good idea...” Kara grumbled. Winn and James were being dirty rotten traitors, that’s what they were up to.

“Hmm...” Lena looked thoughtful. “Shall we leave them to their plotting then, and see if we can find anything edible? They can see Lizzy from where they are, and I don’t think she’s going anywhere.”

“Yes. Let’s,” Kara decided matter of factly, holding out a hand in open defiance of whispering former friends.
Lena raised a single graceful brow, but she took Kara’s hand, allowing her to lace their fingers together and tug her towards the food court.

*****

Whatever the others had been doing, there was no sign of a conspiracy when Lena and Kara got back with food for everyone. They claimed a little grassy hill where they had a clear view of Lizzy and her tiger, still communing through the barrier, and drawing quite a little crowd of onlookers by now, and spread out the blankets Kara had packed, settling down to eat in relative harmony.

It wasn’t long before Lena was wishing they had chosen a shadier spot. She had always been sensitive to the heat, and the afternoon sun was blazing down on them without mercy. Kara of course, was in her element. She glowed under the golden light, seeming only to get brighter with each climbing degree. Lena, by contrast, could feel sweat trickling down the back of her neck, making her itch, and she shifted uncomfortably.

“You okay?” Alex asked, glancing over from her blanket with Maggie. The two women were pressed together despite the heat, Maggie leaning against a rock and Alex tucked neatly between her knees. They were adorable, which only served to irritate Lena further. A few minutes of holding Kara’s hand, cut short by the need to juggle money and food, wasn’t nearly enough.

“I’m fine,” she said, squinting up at the sun. “It’s just getting a little hot out.”

“Oh, Kara has a great trick for that!” Alex said. “Kara, you remember... back when we were kids?”

“Um...Alex?” Kara looked up from her fries, eyes wide. “That might not be the best thing...”

“Come on,” Alex coaxed her. “It really works,” she said to Lena. “You’ll feel better in no time.”

Lena looked between them, sensing something nefarious was going on here, but willing to go along with anything that might make her feel less like she was slowly roasting over an open flame. “I wouldn’t mind...” she said hesitantly.

“See,” Alex gloated. “Lena wants you to do it.” She glanced around. “And no one is looking.”

Kara looked up to the sun briefly, as if praying for strength, but she got up and crossed over to Lena’s side of the blanket. “You’ll have to stand up,” she said awkwardly, and Lena complied, going along obediently when Kara tugged her a little further away from the trail before stepping back. “Close your eyes, and hold out your arms.”

Okay... that was a little unsettling, but Lena wasn’t about to back down now. She closed her eyes and stretched her hands out to either side, skin prickling as she heard Kara move around behind her. What was she-

The first draft of cold air made Lena flinch, icy droplets of vapour settling on the skin at the nape of her neck like little frozen needles. But it was such a relief, Lena tipped her head forward, shivering with more than the drop in temperature as she realized what was happening.

Kara was using freeze breath on her.

Lena realized two very important things as the cold moved from her neck down to her back, and across her shoulders, flowing along either arm to curl around her fingers where it condensed into little beads of water, clinging to her skin like kisses from a winter storm.

One, she was absolutely, completely, and irrevocably in love with this woman.
And two, Alex was a fucking asshole.

Lena nearly moaned when Kara circled back in front of her and the first whisper of arctic breath touched the hollow of her throat. There was no coming back from this. There was literally no coming back from this. She was done, and she didn’t even care.

“Better?” Kara asked, voice husky with more than frost as she finished.

Lena opened her eyes with a shudder, gratified to see that Kara looked nearly as wrecked as she felt. “You did that to your sister?” she asked, not even bothering to pretend that had been anything other than foreplay.

“Um... no?” Kara was blushing again, but she didn’t look away this time. “That was more woosh,” she made a swooping gesture. “And all done. I’ve gotten a little better at it since then.”

“I should hope so...” Lena rubbed her hands together, trying to stop their shaking. “Kara...” she began, but she was interrupted by Winn, apologetically bursting their little bubble.

“Um... sorry, but one of the zookeepers is asking us if we could please take Lizzy away now. That tiger is purring, and apparently tigers can’t actually purr. It’s making him nervous.”

“Sure, yeah...” With one last loaded glance, Kara followed Winn back to the tiger enclosure, leaving Lena in a near daze that lasted the rest of their visit, through all the other animals and a quick detour to the giftshop where Lizzy found a glowing Zebra toy, and then nearly threw an exhausted temper tantrum until Kara reassured her that that wasn’t the promised souvenir, and helped her pick out a giant stuffed tiger that was twice her size instead which she insisted on carrying to the car.

Kara didn’t avoid Lena in all that time exactly, but she got the sense that she wasn’t the only one who was a little shaken. She could give her time... but sooner or later they were going to talk about this. And when they did, Lena was going to make absolutely sure there were no more interruptions.
Kara woke up with the nagging feeling that she’d forgotten something important.

Her last semi-coherent memory was of coming home and collapsing on the couch, Lizzy asleep in her arms, and Lena dropping down beside her; all three of them completely exhausted, because their day hadn’t ended when they’d left the Zoo. First, Winn had talked everyone into dinner at the Rainforest Cafe, and then they’d ended up back at Alex’s place for a drink and a few board games while Lizzy napped in Alex’s giant bed... and after that, it all got kind of blurry.

Kara suspected Maggie had spiked her drink with something extraterrestrial.

So she wasn’t exactly surprised, when she opened her eyes and didn’t immediately recognize her surroundings, though it only took a moment for her to realize that that thing that she’d forgotten? Was to actually go to bed...

Kara couldn’t actually get a crick in her neck, but if she could have, she was pretty sure she’d have a terrible one right about now. She was on her back, twisted diagonally across the couch, with her head and shoulders propped up on the arm and her legs dropping off to the side. Her glasses had disappeared, her cardigan was tangled around her arms, and she thought she might be missing a shoe.

But she couldn’t be sure, because apparently Lena hadn’t remembered to go to bed either, and now she was draped on top of Kara, hands tucked neatly under her chin, and her cheek resting on Kara’s chest, fast asleep.

Okay, so that part was nice, more than nice, extremely distracting actually, but...if they were here, then where was Lizzy?

Wrapping an arm around Lena to keep her from falling off, Kara pushed herself up so that she could look around.

Oh. My. Rao...
Disaster didn’t begin to cover it.

“Mama!” Lizzy called happily from the dining area where she was balancing on a chair on her tip-toes, manoeuvring a giant bowl full of milk and cereal up onto the table. “Br’fast!”

Kara was surprised she had gotten any cereal in the bowl... because the rest of it was on the table, the chairs, the floor... Kara counted at least three boxes that had been pulled out and dumped... and there were probably more. Nearly every drawer and cupboard in the kitchen was ajar; their contents spilling out and scattered around. The fridge was standing open, one shelf half-pulled out, and vegetables lying discarded on the floor. A slowly spreading puddle of milk was taking over the dining area, the empty jug tipped over on its side under the table.

Small piles of books, both in the kitchen and the dining area puzzled Kara, until she realized that the handle of the fridge, most of the cupboards and all of the drawers, were all well out of Lizzy’s usual reach.

That little...

With one last push, Lizzy’s cereal was safely on top of the table, and she crawled up after it, shoving it more or less into the middle before picking up the sugar bowl and inspecting the lid. It only took her a moment to figure out how to get it open. Before Kara could say anything, she had dumped the entire contents on top of her cereal and tossed the dish aside.

Kara winced at the sharp clang as it hit the wall.

“Lizzy,” she tried. “You probably shouldn’t eat that...”

Lizzy clearly disagreed; grinning through the first mouthful as if she didn’t know darned well how much trouble she was going to be in later.

Ugh... on the one hand, soft, snuggly Lena, covering Kara like a warm blanket with newly interesting curves and the faint scent of Jasmine and cucumber, and something else she couldn’t place, but felt a near-hopeless urge to bury her face in. On the other... a willfully destructive toddler in imminent danger of a self-induced sugar coma.

This might actually be the hardest decision Kara had ever made.

Okay... she was a hero, right? She had carried an alien prison ship into space with no hope of returning, she could do this too.

“Lena...” Kara shook the other woman gently by the shoulder. “You need to get up...”

Lena grumbled and tried to burrow deeper into her chest. “Five minutes.”

“I’m not sure this apartment is going to survive another five minutes...”

“Don’t care,” Lena mumbled against Kara’s shoulder.

“Lena...”

“Shh...” Lena freed a hand from between them and fumbled it over Kara’s mouth without opening her eyes. “No talking.”

Kara sighed against her pressing fingers. The Fort Rozz had been easy compared to this. “Come on,” she said, tugging Lena’s hand away.
“No.”

Okay. Fine. If she could lift a spaceship...

Ignoring Lena’s little squeak of surprise and indignation, Kara scooped her up and made flagrant use of her powers to float them both upright.

Suddenly very much awake, Lena scrabbled for a hold around her neck. “Kara!”

“Yes, Lena?” Kara asked innocently, lowering them almost to the floor, but not quite touching down.

“What are you doing?!”

“Getting up, and so are you.”

“Put me down!”

“Okay.” Kara let go for a fraction of a second before catching her again, chuckling when Lena shrieked, her grip tightening on Kara’s shoulders.

“Mommy?” Lizzy queried from the table, sounding concerned. “Mommy fy w’is Mama?”

“No,” Lena answered emphatically. “Mommy does not fly with Mama.”

“’Izzy fy w’is Mama ‘n Mommy.” She stood up, reaching out her chubby little arms, only to wobble when she reached the edge of the table.

“Kara...” Lena warned. “If our daughter falls on her head because you’re being ridiculous...”

“Fine, fine.” Kara set Lena lightly down on the floor and swooped over to catch Lizzy, snatching her up into the air and tucking her to her chest for a quick little barrel roll. They were both laughing when she landed.

“Gain!” Lizzy demanded once she had her giggles under control. “Up n ‘way!”

“Sorry, kiddo,” Kara said, putting her down. “One ride only. We need to talk about this mess...”

Lena was only just now looking around, her eyes narrowing at the chaos. “What happened in here?”

“Um, our daughter is an evil genius?”

“She’s an evil something,” Lena muttered, crossing her arms and fixing Lizzy with a truly impressive Mom glare. “Well? What do you have to say for yourself?”

Lizzy’s lower lip trembled, and she pressed herself back against Kara’s legs. “’Izzy Br’fast?”

“To be fair,” Kara interjected, clasping a tiny shoulder. “She did make herself breakfast. That’s pretty good for not quite two years old.”

The corner of Lena’s mouth twitched.

“’Izzy s’ry?”

Kara would swear those were real tears in the corners of her eyes. This kid was good.

Whether Lena would have stood firm and held Lizzy accountable for what was, in all truth, more
their fault that hers, or given in to the amusement she was clearly trying to hide, would have to remain a mystery. Kara’s phone rang before she could decide either way, the distinctive ringtone somewhat muffled from somewhere inside the couch. “That’s Alex,” Kara said, fumbling through the cushions until she found it. “Sorry, it’s the DEO line, I have to take this...Alex?”

“Kara, where are you?”

“Home, why?” Kara asked, straightening her sweater and taking off her remaining shoe. She’d have to find the other one later.

“You were supposed to be here an hour ago, is everything okay?”

“Oh...” Kara looked up at the clock in the kitchen. Oh no...

Lena followed her gaze and broke the second family rule of the morning while Kara hastily pinned her phone between her ear and her shoulder so that she could use both hands to cover Lizzy’s ears until her Mommy had run out of swear words.

“Kara?”

“Everything’s fine,” Kara hastened to assure her, picking Lizzy up and waving Lena off to take the first shower. “We just slept in. I’ll be there in fifteen minutes.”

“Slept in, huh?” Alex sounded skeptical, but she didn’t give Kara time to explain herself. “Make it ten,” she said. “We’re swamped, and there are more calls coming in. It looks like getting three pieces of whatever those things are off the streets has just made things worse. Even M’ghan has been having trouble at the bar.”

“I’ll be there as soon as I can.” Kara promised. “Alex needs me,” she called to Lena through the bathroom door after she had hung up and put on a little super speed to get Lizzy changed and both of them dressed (she’d found her glasses perched on the nose of Lizzy’s new stuffed tiger,) and set Lizzy down to watch cartoons for five minutes. “You can take Lizzy today, right?”

“Wait, what?” Lena opened the door in nothing but a towel, releasing a wave of vanilla-scented steam, and robbing Kara of anything resembling rational thought. “I have meetings today, Kara, including an investor from Japan that I really can’t miss. I’m already late, and I can’t ask Jess to watch her again. I like Jess, and last time Lizzy hid her cell phone in her coffee cup. Her full coffee cup. What about Winn?”

“Um...We like Winn, too?” Kara answered automatically, stepping aside so that Lena could find something to wear, and trying to wrestle her higher brain functions back under control. “And hello, spears? Biting? The cell?”

“Good point. James?”

“On a business trip. When is your first meeting?”

“Noon,” Lena said, pulling a skirt suit out of the closet and tossing it on the bed before dropping her towel.

Kara whirled around to face the wall, ears burning. “Okay...” she said, half-strangled. “What If I pick her up just before noon? I can take her to Catco with me after that.”

“Are you sure? This is important Kara...”
“I promise.”

“Fine,” Lena said, as she passed Kara on her way out of the bedroom, a smug little smirk on the corner of her lips letting Kara know her blush hadn’t gone unnoticed. “Just don’t be late.”

*****

Kara was absolutely going to be late.

It wasn’t her fault. The Ballyrosh had been heading for a preschool, and Alex’s team already had their hands full. Kara had no idea how all of these dangerous aliens had even heard about the talisman, much less figured out where to look for it. Apparently Maggie and M’gann were working on that, but all they knew so far was that in spite of the general unrest, most of the aliens in the city wanted nothing to do with it, or anyone looking for it. This habit of Mxy’s people, turning wishes into tricks, was well known throughout the universe and even those that might have been curious were quickly dissuaded as soon as they heard Supergirl was involved.

So, whoever was behind this, they probably weren’t local.

Kara ducked as a car flew at her head, swooping underneath it and spinning around to catch the bumper before it could crash into the crowded sidewalk and hurling it back at the giant rock-like monster of an alien. It connected with a satisfying crunch, but the Ballyrosh didn’t seem all that bothered, hunching its craggy shoulders against the impact and wrenching a lamp post out of the ground to swing at her.

“Seriously?” Kara dodged, trying to stay out of reach, but close enough to keep the alien in one place until back-up arrived. “Can’t we talk about this?”

The Ballyrosh just roared, its tiny eyes squinting as it tried to follow her darting flight.

“I guess that’s a no...”

The lamppost whistled through the air only a few inches away, and Kara shot up, looping around to slam into the back of the alien’s head and knock it off balance before launching herself away again.

“Alex,” she said into her communicator, circling back. “This guy is getting kind of cranky.”

“We’re on the way,” Alex assured her. “Just keep it busy. J’onn has a plan.”

“Right...” Kara banked and turned, flying in close enough that the alien had to rock back on its heels to get room to swing its make-shift club. “Just keep the walking mountain busy... I can do that.”

Maybe freeze breath might slow it down. Kara went lower, skimming the asphalt, shooting between what passed for its ankles and spinning around the right foot, exhaling ice and frost until it was frozen to the ground. The lamppost slammed down as she was flying clear, catching the edge of her cape and jerking her out of the air. Kara hit the ground with enough force to plough a shallow trench, but she was lucky enough to roll just out of reach. The Ballyrosh roared again as it swung wildly at her, but it was stuck fast. Enraged, the alien began smashing the lamppost into the ice around its foot, sending jagged chunks and dagger-like shards flying.

“Ugh...” Kara picked herself up, wincing. That was going to hurt for a few hours. She threw herself back into the air, unwilling to stay still long enough for a direct hit once that thing got loose. Her communicator hissed with garbled words and static, jarred loose by the fall, and she gave it a little shake to clear it before tucking it back into place, expecting Alex.
“Where are you?”

“Where are you?” Lena’s voice was a little broken up, but unmistakeable. “It’s after twelve!”

“Umm... a little busy?” Kara flipped up the edge of her cape against a shower of ice chips. “How did you get this line?”

“Winn showed me how to patch into DEO communications,” Lena said, as if it was nothing. “I needed you here half an hour ago!”

“Is that Lena?” Alex cut in, incredulous. “This line is supposed to be secure!”

“Uh...” Winn sheepishly joined the conversation. “I might have taught her how to bypass security. For emergencies!” he added hastily.

“Winn!” Alex was furious. “Do you have any idea how many protocols you broke?”

“Three?”

“I don’t care about your precious protocols right now, Agent Danvers,” Lena interrupted. “I have a very important client waiting, and I need Kara -”

“Well, so do I. You’re going to have to reschedule.”

“I can’t reschedule. My client is flying back to Japan in two hours, and I’ve been waiting six months for this meeting.”

“Fine, I’ll just tell the rampaging alien to take a break and come back tomorrow, I’m sure he won’t mind.”

“Alex-” Kara tried, and then “Lena-” but neither of them were listening to her. “Guess I’ll just go back to wrestling with the walking mountain,” she muttered under her breath.

“Good call,” Winn agreed, switching channels so that the argument faded into the background. “J’onn says to try heat vision. Apparently these guys have a really low melting point. You should be able to disable it.”

“It’s worth a try.”

The ballyrosh finally succeeded in freeing its foot with a final deafening smash, and Kara dove back in for round two.

“Let’s melt some rocks...”

*****

In the end, Kara was more than an hour late, though she saved five minutes by flying straight in through the balcony door instead of taking the subtler civilian entrance.

“I’m here- Oh!” She skidded to a stop, both literally and figuratively. “Hi, Jess!” Kara made a hasty attempt at her signature hands-on-hips superhero pose, and nearly got tangled in her own cape. “I’m um... here to consult with Ms. Luthor on a... an important alien matter.”

“Hello, Ms. Danvers,” Jess replied, not lifting her eyes from her tablet and continuing her conversation with Lena as if Kara’s arrival, alleged secret identity, and complete inability to lie were nothing more than a passing interruption. “Mr. Murakami is very sorry, Ms. Luthor, but he was
unable to wait any longer. He sends his regards, and hopes that you will be able to make time for him when he returns to the United States in three months. Your one-o-clock is here however. Should I send her in now, or would you like a few minutes?” Now she looked at Kara, a critical once over that made no secret of who she blamed for the missed meeting.

Kara tried to appear penitent.

“Five minutes, please,” Lena said smoothly, nothing in her voice or expression betraying either surprise at Jess’ discovery, or disappointment about Mr. Murakami. “Could you order a car for Ms. Danvers and Lizzy in the meantime? They’ll be leaving through the front door,” she added, with a slight emphasis on the word front.

“Of course.” Jess took the dismissal with practiced ease, leaving them alone.

“I’m so sorry-” Kara tried to apologize, but Lena stopped her with a look.

“Don’t,” she said tightly. “I don’t want to talk about it.”

“But Lena, I-“

“I said, don’t.” Lena didn’t raise her voice, but she didn’t have to. It was all in the tone. “Please, just take Lizzy and go, so that I can get on with my day.”

Kara gave up. She recognized that edge to Lena’s jaw, and the set of her shoulders. Anything she said now was just going to make it worse.“Okay,” she said. “Is there anything else I can do?”

“No.” The single word was clipped, short. “But thank you,” Lena added, thawing slightly. “I’ll be working late, so don’t expect me home for dinner, but please make sure Lizzy eats something healthy, and I’ll speak to Jess about…” she gestured to the suit.

“Ms. Danvers,” Jess hailed her from her desk outside of Lena’s office. “A word?”

“Sure.” Kara hitched Lizzy up on her hip and came over, not without some trepidation. “How did you…?”

“Please.” Jess was all disdain. “No one is that fast. But that’s not why I wanted to talk to you.”

“Okay…” Kara was just going to let that go. “Is this about Lena?”

“This is about you,” Jess corrected her. “And what exactly you think you’re doing here.”

“Jess, I…” Kara groped for understanding. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Really? I may have been Ms. Luthor’s secretary for less than a year, but I am very good at my job, Ms. Danvers. I know her better than I know myself. Do you really think I wouldn’t notice the sudden addition of a wife and child?”

“Oh…” Kara had literally no idea what to do with that information. “I can ex-“

“No need.” Jess forestalled her with a raised hand. “Just stop messing it up!”

“What?”
“I don’t care how it happened, or why,” Jess said. “All I know is, aside from today’s blunder on your part, she’s actually happy, for the first time since she hired me. And keeping Ms. Luthor happy is the most important part of my job, so, since I’m assuming this isn’t some nefarious plot on your part...?”

Kara shook her head, a little dazed.

“Good. Now, go away and let her calm down, and then come back and fix it. Understood?”

“Um... yes?”

“Excellent.” Apparently satisfied, Jess went back to her tablet, typing madly. “You may go,” she said, when Kara didn’t immediately walk away. “Your car is waiting out front.”

“Right...Thank you.” Kara shouldered Lizzy’s diaper bag, nearly missing Jess’ formal you’re welcome, as she headed for the exit, mind whirling.

*****

Lena set down her third cup of coffee, wincing at the sharp clink of ceramic on glass, and tried to refocus on the papers in front of her, but the words were refusing to lie still against the page. She rubbed her eyes, pinching the bridge of her nose and willed her head to stop pounding. Her neck, back and shoulders were already aching a dull counterpoint. Spending the night on the couch after a day on her feet had, in hindsight, been a bad idea.

Add in back-to-back meetings, minus the one she’d missed, several hours of paperwork, a to-do pile that was still bigger than the done pile and right all Lena wanted was a hot bath and a glass of wine. Well, not all, she was too damned tired to pretend she hadn’t entertained a brief fantasy about massage oils and a certain pair of super-strong hands, but why wish for the impossible?.

Jess had given up on her at seven; early by Lena’s usual standards, but late enough for alternate-reality Lena that the secretary had been making a point of checking on her every twenty minutes, as if she could subtly nag her into leaving the office. Lena had eventually ordered her to go home, wishing she could follow.

But it wasn’t just the mountain of unfinished work keeping her at work long after the sun had slipped under the horizon.

The papers on her desk fluttered, rustling in a sudden breeze from the open balcony door. Lena dropped her hand and looked up, a tired smile catching the corner of her lips as Kara hovered, literally this time, on the threshold. The light from Lena’s desk fell short, leaving the hero in shadow, but Lena knew her well enough by now to read the hesitation in the way she hadn’t quite landed, one hand on the doorframe, but the toes of her boots touching only air, as if she wasn’t entirely sure of her welcome.

“You can come in,” Lena said softly. Her earlier frustration was long gone; drowned in several doses of bitterly strong coffee and an uncomfortable amount of self reflection. “I’m not going to bite.”

Kara didn’t make a sound when she settled onto the floor, cape falling heavily around her as she stepped inside and out of the wind. “I’m sorry.”

“You can come in,” Lena said softly. Her earlier frustration was long gone; drowned in several doses of bitterly strong coffee and an uncomfortable amount of self reflection. “I’m not going to bite.”

Kara didn’t make a sound when she settled onto the floor, cape falling heavily around her as she stepped inside and out of the wind. “I’m sorry.”

“Forget about it,” Lena said, getting up from behind her desk. “I was out of line.”

“You weren’t,” Kara protested. “You shouldn’t have to-“
“It’s okay,” Lena insisted, picking up a pile of papers and leaning back against the edge of the desk. “I wasn’t actually mad at you.”

Kara looked confused. “You weren’t?”

“No,” Lena admitted.

“Then why...?”

Lena sighed. “I had expectations that were unrealistic. You have your own job, and an entire city to protect. I had no right to ask you to put that aside or to blame you when you couldn’t, but I did, because that’s the way I was raised. Luthors don’t make excuses and we definitely don’t accept them.” She rubbed at her brow, the headache intensifying.

“Lena—”

“Please, just let me finish?” Lena waited until Kara nodded, and then continued. “I was mad at myself for continuing to buy into that bullshit, when I know its utter crap. Here...” She handed the stack of papers to Kara. “I’ve been looking at resumes.”

Kara took them, brow furrowing as she looked them over. “You’re hiring a new secretary?”

“I’m promoting Jess,” Lena explained. “This last week has shown me that while I’m still dedicated to Lcorp, it’s not enough for me anymore. When this is over, I want a family. A real family,” she clarified when Kara’s eyes widened in surprise. “And I want to do things differently. I want to be there for them the way mine wasn’t there for me, so I’m going to learn how to delegate, and besides,” she added wryly. “Jess is wasted as a secretary.”

“She really is,” Kara agreed feelingly. “You’re sure about this?”

Lena nodded. “I am.”

“Then... that’s great!” Kara’s grin was as wide as ever, but it was missing its usual sparkle. “You’re going to be amazing.”

“Well I’m certainly getting enough practice,” Lena said. “Speaking of which... where’s Lizzy?”

“In good hands,” Kara assured her. “Actually, that’s something I wanted to talk to you about. Are you finished for the night? I could um... take you home?” she looked hopeful, but there was also a hint of sadness there, and it was the latter that made Lena swallow her immediate refusal.

“You do know I can drive, right?”

“You’re exhausted,” Kara countered. “And it’s late. I can have you home in five minutes.”

“Hmm...” Lena couldn’t quite believe she was actually considering it.

“Please?” Kara said. “I- It would mean a lot to me...”

As if Lena could resist that... “All right,” she found herself agreeing. “Just let me get my purse.”

Kara waited on the balcony while Lena gathered her things and shut off the lights, locking the glass doors behind her. Her stomach was doing nervous flip flops as she turned and stepped closer, both at the thought of flying, and at the thought of flying with Kara. “How do we do this?”

“May I?” Kara asked, holding out her arms.
Lena nodded, gulping when Kara scooped her up, cradling her close to her chest.

“Sorry,” she said. “It’s the easiest way...”

“It’s fine,” Lena said, tentatively winding her arms around Kara’s neck and forcing herself to relax. And it was. It was even... nice. Though she nearly swallowed her tongue when Kara took off. Clinging tighter, she closed her eyes and focused on breathing instead of the rush of wind through her hair.

“So,” she said, trying to take her mind off the thousands of feet of empty air below them. “Who’s watching Lizzy?”

“Eliza,” Kara said. “My foster mother.”

Lena’s eyes flew open again. “You called you mother?”

Kara snorted. “No. Alex did. Apparently, she thought we needed the help.”

“Huh...” Lena thought it over. “She’s not wrong. Though I’m not sure I’m ready to meet the parents just yet.”

Kara chuckled, the sound warm and soft against Lena’s ear. “I wasn’t sure I was ready for that either... but... you were right.”

“About?”

“Putting family first,” Kara said. “And figuring out what you want.”

Lena waited, but when Kara didn’t elaborate she asked, “And what is that for you?”

“This,” Kara said simply, raising Lena’s hopes only to dash them as she stuttered her way through an amendment. “I mean... something like this. A family. Being Supergirl is always going to be a big part of my life, so if I’m going to do this right, I have to learn to ask for help. Just like you. Back on Krypton, my family’s motto was El Mayarah, Stronger Together. I forget that sometimes here on Earth, but I remembered it today, so I asked Eliza if she’d be willing to stay in National City and help out with Lizzy until we get this all sorted out.”

_Huh_... Lena thought, letting that idea sink in. “I think I would have liked Krypton,” she said softly.

“Me too,” Kara agreed. “I wish you could have seen it.”

They flew silently for a few minutes, Lena’s fear ebbing as she soaked up Kara’s warmth and breathed in the fading scent of sunshine from Kara’s skin. Her eyes fluttered closed.

“Almost there,” Kara said, cradling her impossibly closer.

“Take your time,” Lena whispered. She wasn’t ready for it to be over yet.
The flight was over too soon.

Though Lena did suspect Kara of dawdling, just a little. It was certainly longer than the promised five minutes before they touched down on their balcony. Given the rush of take off, she’d expected the landing to be a shock, tightening her arms around Kara’s neck in anticipation, but there was only the softest bump as boots met concrete and they were home.

Kara held her close for another moment, just long enough for Lena to wonder if she wasn’t the only one who wished their flight could have lasted a little longer before setting her lightly back on her feet. Lena couldn’t quite hold back a wordless grumble of complaint at the move, her arms still wrapped around Kara’s neck, face buried in her shoulder. She was too damned tired to be subtle. If this was all she was ever going to have, then she was going to take as much of it as she could get.

Kara was stiff at first, but she relaxed slowly, her hands coming up to rest lightly on Lena’s waist, and then sliding around to her back to tug her closer. Lena bit her lip when Kara pressed the briefest of kisses to the top of her head before setting her gently back. “We should go in...”

Lena let her lower lip slip through her teeth. It wasn’t quite a pout, but it was close. Kara gulped, though, that may have also been from the way Lena trailed her thumbs down the sides of her throat as she finally loosened her stranglehold around her neck, fingers tangling in the edges of the bright red cape before she pressed a palm over the crest on Kara’s chest, smiling at what she found there. Maybe this wasn’t a complete lost cause.
Lena tapped her fingers over Kara’s wildly beating heart, raising an eyebrow. “Are we ever going to talk about this?”

Kara flushed. “Maybe?”

Lena smirked, but she dropped her hands and reluctantly stepped away.

They found Eliza and Lizzy in the kitchen. Eliza was busy at the stove, and Lizzy was standing on a chair at the island, very slowly and carefully pressing a tray full of little balls of cookie dough flat with a fork. Her tiny nose was scrunched up in concentration, and the very tip of her tongue was sticking out. She was so focused she didn’t even see them come in through the living room, and in that moment, Lena damned herself for a coward. She didn’t want a real family. She wanted this family, not some imaginary future one. Kara and Lizzy, and she wanted them now.

“Oh!” Eliza said, startled when she turned around with a tray of cookies fresh out of the oven. “You’re home.”

Lizzy looked up from her fork, face breaking out in a wide grin. “Mommy, Mama!” She called out without leaving her precious cookies. “‘Izzy ‘n Nanny, cookah!”

“Nanny?” Kara asked with an equally delighted grin, enveloping Eliza in a firm hug once the tray of cookies was safely set down on the stove. “Is that what we’re calling you?”

“Apparently,” Eliza said, returning the hug with one eye on Lizzy. “She knows her own mind, that one. I wasn’t about to argue.”

“Wise choice,” Lena added. She held out a hand once Eliza had been released. “Lena Luthor.”

Eliza took the proffered hand in a firm shake. “Eliza Danvers,” she said, without so much as a hint of hesitation at the Luthor name. “I’ve heard good things about you from both my girls. Oh, I’m sorry,” she added, giving Lizzy a wink. “All three of my girls.”

Lizzy offered her a toothy grin and went back to flattening cookie dough. Mothers were wonderful of course, but cookies were serious.

“She didn’t give you too much trouble?” Kara asked, snitching a freshly baked cookie from the tray, and sticking her tongue out at Lena’s sigh. Like mother, like daughter.

“She was an absolute joy,” Eliza assured them, nudging Kara aside to start shifting the cookies off the tray and onto the cooling racks. She warded off a second theft with the quick slap of a spatula on sneaking fingers. “Leave some for those of us without fire-proof mouths,” she scolded. “And go put that cape away. You’re off duty.”

“Crime never sleeps,” Kara said loftily, with a dramatic swirl of said-cape as she headed obediently for their room, but not without using a little super-speed to steal two more cookies on her way.

“Kara Zor-El!” Eliza snapped.

Kara giggled all the way down the hallway.

Eliza shook her head, sharing a look of fond exasperation with Lena as she finished the tray.

“Thank you for this,” Lena said, a little awkwardly. “Lizzy is... a bit much for most people. Though I suppose after raising one Kryptonian...”
Eliza snorted, taking Lizzy’s finished tray and sliding it into the oven. “Kara? She was easy. Now Alex at this age?” Eliza raised her eyes to the heavens. “She was a handful. Never still for a moment, and into everything. We went through more babysitters... The trick was keeping her busy,” she added, handing Lizzy a damp cloth and showing her how to wipe down the counter.

“Alex?” Lena asked, surprised. Though... she considered the freeze-breath incident with a shiver, and nodded. “Nevermind, I can see it.”

“See what?” Kara asked, coming back in jeans and a sweater. She snagged a fourth cookie, but this one she blew a quick breath of ice over and handed to Lena with a grin that was bordering on a smirk.

Eliza raised an eyebrow and Lena blushed, but she took the cookie and nibbled on it.

“How much Lizzy takes after your sister,” Eliza explained for both of them, ignoring for the moment the sudden tension in the air. “Though that bottomless pit she calls a stomach is all yours.”

Kara shrugged, unrepentant. “Stay for tea and cookies?” She asked. “Alex mentioned you might have some ideas about this fifth-dimensional whammy.”

“It’s fascinating,” Eliza agreed, putting the kettle on and taking cups and plates down from the cupboard. Kara went to help her and Lena moved Lizzy to her highchair, buckling the squirming toddler in while Lizzy fought to keep the plateful of cookies in sight at all times. “She said the false memory effect was linked to the child?”

Kara nodded. “Her, or pictures of her. Winn was trying to keep the spread contained online, but it seems to be pretty much city-wide now.”

“Hmm...” Eliza sat down at the table, sliding a plastic plate with two cookies over to Lizzy who instantly stuffed the first one entirely into her mouth. “But there is still little to no effect for those closest to you?”

“Tiger?” Lena added, taking a seat beside Lizzy.

Kara explained their trip to the Zoo, pausing to make the tea and bring it to the table along with a sippy-cup of milk for Lizzy before sitting down across from Lena and filling her own plate with cookies. “The Zoo Keeper was pretty upset,” she finished.

“That poor man,” Eliza said feelingly. So the effect extends to animals as well...?” She looked intrigued. “I hadn’t thought of that, but it makes sense.”

“You have a theory?” Lena asked.

“I have ideas,” Eliza admitted. “I agree with Winn’s findings, that Lizzy isn’t entirely of this dimension. Her very existence seems to bend reality around her until the world becomes as she sees it. She expects someone to know her, and so they do. She believes a tiger should be her friend, and it is.”

“So do you think she’s doing it on purpose...?” Kara asked, eyeing Lizzy with a certain fond suspicion.
Eliza shrugged. “I doubt it. It’s more likely a passive effect, or you’d have installed a tiger-door by now.”

Lena could only imagine... “So why are we immune?” she asked.

“Reality bends,” Eliza explained. “It doesn’t break. I expect you were right in your initial assumptions, Lena, and her influence is limited by proximity to the source material. The more certain someone is of their version of reality, the harder it would be to change it. You two, for example, and your close friends, are completely unaffected. And I had no idea what was going on until Alex called me.” That last was said with a hint of reproach, and Lena saw Kara wince. “But after meeting Lizzy, I have memories... ’she reached out and took Lena’s hand, giving it a gentle squeeze. “It’s strange,” she admitted. “I know I’ve never met you, but I feel as if I know you. I am completely certain Kara has never been married, and yet I remember your wedding. The chicken was a little dry, by the way,” she told Kara, releasing Lena’s hand. “But the wine was excellent.”

“So that’s how she did it!” Kara snapped her fingers, looking adorably disgruntled.

“Who?” Lena and Eliza asked in unison.

“Jess,” Kara explained. “Lena’s secretary,” she added for Eliza’s benefit. “She knows none of this is real, but she fakes it really well.”

“Oh she does, does she?” Lena suddenly saw a great many things in a different light. That little sneak. Oh they were going to have a long conversation tomorrow morning.

“Uhh...” Kara looked guilty. “I was going to tell you?”

Lena drummed her fingers on the table. “Oh, I’m not mad at you.” She waved off Kara’s apology. “I do have a few questions for my secretary though.” And a few choice words, she added silently.

“Interesting...” Eliza looked thoughtful. “I wonder how many other people might be caught between both realities. I’d like to speak with this Jess if I could? Would you say she’s resisting this version of events, or embracing it? I wouldn’t be surprised if Lizzy’s effect extends to encouraging a preference for this reality. She certainly seems to inspire a particular affection for herself, in spite of her um... energetic, disposition.”

“Jess didn’t seem upset about it.” Kara said, ducking her head to adjust her glasses. “At least not about that...”

“Fascinating,” Eliza said again, clearing their plates. “But it’s late, and someone is falling asleep.” She nodded towards Lizzy who was chewing with her eyes closed, chin slowly sinking towards her chest.

Chuckling softly, Kara gently pried the last chunk of cookie out of Lizzy’s little fist, and picked her up. “Come on my little reality bender,” she said. “Time for bed.”

Lizzy grumbled into Kara’s chest, but she didn’t even open her eyes.

“I’ll tidy up the kitchen,” Lena said, patting Lizzy on the back until her complaints eased into a soft little snore.

“I’ll help,” Eliza offered.

It was a little awkward, working beside a near stranger, who was also, sort of, her mother in law. Lena desperately wanted to make a good impression, but at the same time she almost resented this
intrusion into the illusion of her domestic life with Kara. Eliza’s presence and her questions were an unavoidable reminder of how transient this all was. Lena was torn between hoping Eliza would approve, and wishing she would leave. It was an uncomfortable position to wash the dishes in.

“This must be terribly strange for you,” Eliza said, passing Lena a mixing bowl to dry and put away, and proving once again, that all mothers were omniscient.

“Maybe a bit,” Lena admitted, sliding the bowl back into the cupboard. “I can’t imagine it’s all that comfortable for you either,” she pointed out. “Seeing your alien daughter playing house with a Luthor.”

Eliza shook her head, frowning. “I don’t care what your last name is. My daughters are both excellent judges of character. If they trust you, I trust you.”

“Oh.” Lena looked down at her hands, clutching the dish towel until her knuckles were white. “That’s... I’m not used to that. Thank you.”

“Lena...” Eliza sounded a little frustrated, but also sad. She took the towel away from her and set it aside, pressing Lena’s hands between her own instead. “I meant what I said. I feel like I already know you, and while I know those memories aren’t real, the feelings that go with them are.” She paused. “I understand that we’re not really family, and you’ve already been hurt so badly by those who should have protected you, but I hope, in time, you’ll consider me a friend?”

Lena jerked her head up at that, unable to believe the naked sincerity in Eliza’s voice, but it was there in her eyes too. There was worry of course, and a little bit of understandable caution, but Lena looked in vain for suspicion or disappointment, and found only honesty and respect. She was mortified to feel her lower lip tremble, and tears burn at the corners of her eyes.

“Oh my dear...” Without another word, Eliza pulled her into a hug. “You’ve been alone for so long.” She said, holding her close and stroking her hair soothingly as Lena tried not to let the tears fall. “I want you to know, I had a very long talk with Alex, and whatever happens from here, you have my blessing and my support. When and if the time comes, I would be honoured to consider you my daughter.”

Oh...

So much for self control. Lena was crying in earnest now and Eliza was looking for a box of tissues when Kara came back from putting Lizzy to bed, looking completely bewildered between the two of them. She rounded on Eliza.

“What did you do to her?” She demanded, hands on her hips, fully prepared to do murder on Lena’s behalf.

“Nothing,” Lena said, wiping her eyes, and trying not to laugh at Kara’s overblown protective streak. “I’m fine.”

“You’re crying!”

“It’s been a long day,” she said. “Eliza is very kind, and I’m just tired. See,” she added, taking her hands away from her now-dry eyes. “No more tears.”

Kara still looked suspicious, but not quite so battle-ready. “You’re sure?”

“Very sure.”
“Go get some sleep,” Eliza urged her. “I’ll have Kara give you my number, and you can call me if you need anything.”

Lena nodded. “Thank you, Eliza.”

“I’ll be there in a minute,” Kara promised, her brow still crinkled in concern. “I just want to say goodnight to Eliza.” She watched Lena go, waiting until she heard the bedroom door close before turning back to her foster mother. “You’re sure you didn’t say anything to upset her?”

Eliza sighed, crossing her arms and leaning back against the counter. “I suppose I deserve that, after my years of miscommunication with your sister, but no. I don’t think so. I was just trying to help. She’s lost so much... I hope you know how important you and Lizzy are to her.”

“We’re not her real family,” Kara protested, a little sulkily if she was being honest. That emphasis still hurt. Lena wanted a real family. Not a make-believe one with her best friend. “Not like that.”

“Hmm...” Eliza didn’t look convinced. “But you share a bed?”

“Ugh!” Kara flopped back against the counter beside Eliza. “That would be courtesy of our Fifth Dimensional friend. Wherever we go to sleep, we wake up together. And the more we fight it, the more we’re pushed together. It’s just easier this way.”

“I see, and that’s all it is to you? Convenience?”

“Does it matter?”

“I think it does,” Eliza said. “After all, if your friend from Daxam is right and this all started with a wish, someone wished it.”

“Lena wouldn’t have wished for this.”

“Wouldn’t she?”

If only... but no. Kara shook her head. “She didn’t even want to hold Lizzy at first. I doubt she wished for her.”

“Are you sure? Ask yourself, if Lizzy was really your wish, would she call you Mama, or Jeju?”

That... she hadn’t actually thought of that.

“We’re not always ready for our wishes to come true,” Eliza continued. “Sometimes I think we don’t even know what it is we truly wish for. I never would have thought to ask for a daughter from another planet, but once I had you...” She wrapped an arm around Kara’s shoulders, pulling her tight against her side. “There was no power on this earth that could have taken you away from me.”

Kara leaned into her, savouring the rare closeness she usually shared only with Alex, and more recently Lena. “You really don’t regret it?”

“Never.”

“Even though Jeremiah...”

“Even then.” Eliza just squeezed her tighter. “You’re his daughter too, and I know he would do it all over again. Your real family isn’t always who you think it’s going to be, Kara.”

“Well I’m here now,” Eliza promised. “I’ve got a nice hotel room, and I’ll stay until you don’t need me anymore.”

“I always need you.”

Eliza laughed at the unspoken pout. “No, you don’t. You’ve grown up so much, but every new mom can use an extra set of hands. Even two new moms.”

“Ha, ha,” Kara deadpanned, pulling away. “Just wait until Alex has kids. You’re going to have to move to National City.”

Eliza sighed. “I am, aren’t I? Oh dear. Do you know any good Real Estate agents?”

Kara laughed. “Goodnight, Eliza.”

“Goodnight, dear.”

Eliza gave her one more hug, and left with a tin of cookies under her arm.

Kara turned out the lights and went to her room, where Lena was already asleep, a book still lying open on the covers beside her. Kara tucked her bookmark back into place and set it on her bedside table. She dawdled through her bed-time routine, brushing her teeth at normal human speed, and taking comfort in her most worn and faded set of pyjamas. She turned off the bedroom light before climbing into bed beside Lena, Eliza and Winn’s words in her ears.

Were they right?

And if she was too much of a coward to ask, could Lena be frightened too?

All of these questions made her head hurt. Why couldn’t it just be simple?

Lena mumbled a sleepy protest as the bed dipped, and she rolled over, blinking drowsily. “Kara?”

“Shh....” Kara soothed. “It’s just me.”

“C’mere...” Lena tugged Kara into place with clumsy fingers, pushing her down on her back and curling up beside her with her head on Kara’s shoulder. She laid a hand over Kara’s heart, fingers just brushing the skin above her collar.

Kara tucked an arm around her waist, pulling her closer and breathing her in.

Maybe it could be simple.

“This is good too,” she whispered.

There was a moment of silence. Neither of them even breathing, and then...

“It feels real,” Lena murmured into Kara’s shoulder, fingers trembling against her chest, where Kara’s heart was suddenly beating overtime.

They both laughed softly at that, Lena closing her fingers around a handful of Kara’s top and snuggling impossibly closer. Kara pressed a chaste kiss to the top of her head and resigned herself, not unhappily, to being a living pillow.

There was more they could have said, but Lena was already falling asleep again, and Kara was too relieved, and thrilled, and terrified, all at once, to even think about braving more words.
This was enough.

For now.
Facing facts

Chapter Summary

Kara and Lena face an uncomfortable truth, and Lizzy is Lizzy.

Chapter Notes

Yay! Got it done with 13 minutes to spare before it would officially not be the weekend anymore. :D

Thank you all for sticking around through that long hiatus and leaving such awesome feedback on chapter 14. I got all my chapter 13 comments answered, and I'll get to chapter 14's in the next few days.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

10...9...8...7...6...5...

Kara had promised Alex she wouldn’t break the sound barrier inside city limits unless it was an emergency. This was nearly an emergency. Shooting over buildings at just under the limit, she counted down the seconds in her head and ignored the ringing of the phone tucked into her boot.

“Almost there...”

The little school was nestled cozily in a thick cluster of trees and shrubs. Red brick under a tidy black shingle roof and white shutters, a natural playground on three sides and a small parking lot out front; it was the very picture of quality. But right now Kara couldn’t have cared less if it was a rickety shack suspended over a tank full of sharks. So long as she got there on time.

3...2...1...

Kara didn’t quite crash into a bush, but it was a near thing. A quick spin and she had traded the cape for a pair of tan slacks and a navy sweater over a white button-up. Getting out of the bushes was a little more awkward. Kara wasn’t entirely sure the foliage would recover. She hastily straightened her clothes and made her way up the little walkway to the parking lot where Lena and Lizzy were waiting for her.

“Mama!” Lizzy waved from Lena’s arms, thrilled at the dramatic entrance.

“I made it!” Kara boasted, grinning as she reached them.

“Barely,” Lena admitted, putting away her phone. “Here, take her and hold still.” She passed Lizzy to Kara and sighed as she plucked three leaves and a twig out of Kara’s hair. “Did you have to land in the bushes?”

“I was trying to be discreet.”
A raised eyebrow gave Kara some idea of her complete lack of success, but Lena’s touch was gentle as she ran her fingers through Kara’s curls, persuading them to look a little less windblown superhero, and a little more responsible mom. Kara fought the urge to close her eyes and purr like Lizzy’s tiger when Lena lingered longer than strictly necessary, her perfectly manicured nails tracing lightly across Kara’s temples as she combed out the few last imaginary tangles.

“Will I do?” Kara asked, flushing when Lena gave her a very slow and obvious once over in response, eyes half closed and lower lip caught between her teeth.

“Good enough,” she said with a smirk.

Kara rolled her eyes. “Gee, thanks. You look perfectly adequate yourself.”

Lena’s smirk grew wider, but she refused to rise to the bait. In a black pinstripe pencil skirt and blazer over a smoky grey blouse, and three-inch heels, she knew exactly how good she looked. “Thank you darling,” she said with perfect sincerity and just enough smoulder to make Kara’s insides shiver. “Shall we?” she asked, holding out a hand.

Kara considered resisting for about half a second before shifting Lizzy to her hip and taking it. Lena’s eyes sparkled in smug victory as she tugged her closer and led the way to the front door, Kara following obediently beside her, still blushing.

They hadn’t talked about that. Not yet.

Last night, Kara had said this, and Lena had said real, and in that moment, they had been on exactly the same page. But now... now Kara was a coward. It hadn’t helped that an urgent call from the DEO had pulled her out of bed before the alarm and before their usual “accidental” morning cuddle. Leaving Lizzy with Lena, Kara had spent all day wrestling aliens and dodging Snapper. Again. On the upside, they had finally brought in someone who preferred talking over incarceration. So at three fifty-five, Kara had left Alex and J’onn in the interrogation room before speeding her way back across the city for their appointment at the “Little Tots” Daycare where they were hoping to find the fourth piece of the Talisman.

There had been a few phone calls in between, mostly missed voicemails on both ends, arranging for Eliza to pick Lizzy up at Lcorp and take her to the park for a few hours so that Lena could get some work done, and another one from Lena reminding Kara that their appointment was at four, and no, rampaging G’lorks, were not an adequate excuse for being late.

But nothing about last night.

It was just... Kara didn’t quite know how to act, or what to say. She’d admitted she wanted this, but did Lena understand Kara wanted her too? The flirting would suggest yes, but Lena had always enjoyed flustering her. And come to that, what if Kara had completely misunderstood, and Lena hadn’t meant what Kara had thought she meant, and feeling real wasn’t real enough?

Kara was not a complicated person. Beyond, of course, the necessary complexities of being an alien, impersonating a human who regularly disguised herself as a superhero, while also now pretending to be married to, and raising a child with, a prominent CEO of a company famed for villainy with regards to said Superhero’s hero cousin, who was also an alien... but that was easy. This was impossible.

She missed Miss Grant.

Cat would have sighed at her and tsked, and probably yelled a little, but she had a way of making
things clearer.

Somehow Kara didn’t think Cat and Lena would get along though.

They reached the door and Lena pressed the button for the intercom, giving their names when prompted by the crackling voice from the speaker. The door buzzed as the lock disengaged and they stepped inside.

Kara’s first impression was of colour. The front hall was decorated with children’s artwork, all neatly and thoughtfully displayed on the cork boards and on top of the natural wood cubbies. There were murals painted on the walls; an ocean on one side, and a quiet forest scene on the other. The cubbies themselves held a rainbow of little coats and shoes.

It was beautiful and welcoming, and Kara was almost sorry they had come with ulterior motives. She could see dropping Lizzy off here in the mornings, still heavy-eyed and sleepy, and picking her up at the end of the day, bright and bubbling with pictures for the fridge and stories for the ride home.

“Mama, ‘ishes!” Lizzy reached up to touch tiny clay fish hanging on a long forked branch that had been suspended from the ceiling, their scales fashioned out of multi-coloured buttons.

“Those were made by our After School Class.” A short, round woman had come to meet them, beaming up at Lizzy. Her tight silver curls were at odds with the spring in her step and the necklace of multicoloured noodles on a bright green string around her neck.

“They’re lovely,” Lena said. “You must be Ms. Chapple?”

“Call me Faye,” she insisted. “And you’re the Luthor-Danvers family, which means this must be little Eliza Louise.”

“’Izzy,” Lizzy corrected her bluntly, blue eyes narrowing slightly.

“We call her Lizzy,” Kara explained, giving her a little bounce to remind her not to glare at strangers. A reminder that went largely ignored.


“Hi!” Lizzy waved, good cheer instantly restored now that she had been properly addressed. “Mama,” she announced, patting Kara on the shoulder, and “Mommy,” she added, pointing at Lena. “’Izzy, down?” she asked Kara, clearly feeling that all social obligations had now been met and eager to explore this new space.

“Lizzy can wait,” Kara told her firmly, ignoring the resulting pout. “I also answer to Kara,” she added for Faye’s sake, offering a hand, which Faye took in a warm grip, the sparkle in her eye assuring Kara that she found the slightly unconventional introduction more amusing than anything else.

“Lena,” Lena added, also shaking hands with the little woman. “Thank you for offering us this tour, we’ve been having a bit of trouble finding reliable care.”

“No trouble at all,” Faye assured them. “One of our families is moving to Metropolis, so we have an opening in our toddler room. Usually we would take someone from the waiting list, but when we got your call, the board agreed to make an exception.” She winked. “Shall we?”

Faye led the way down the hall, Lena and Kara following. Kara put Lizzy down so she could walk, but she kept a tight hold of her hand. “What was the winking about?” Kara asked, leaning close to
whisper in Lena’s ear.

“I don’t know,” Lena admitted, also whispering. “Money? I do have a fairly ridiculous amount of it.”

Kara snorted softly. “This place isn’t exactly broke.”

Lena shrugged. “Maybe she’s just a fan.”

“You have fans?”

“Jealous?” Lena asked archly.

“Of your imaginary fans?” Kara grinned. “Nope. I’m pretty sure I have more.”

Lena sniffed. “Well not all of us can fly.”

“Would you like to?” Kara asked, a little too eagerly if Lena’s slow, knowing smirk was anything to go by. “I mean, I could take you, again...if you wanted to,” she mumbled, adjusting her glasses.

“I’d like that,” Lena said, reclaiming her free hand and winding their fingers together.

“Tonight?”

Lena leaned in even closer, warm breath brushing Kara’s ear. “It’s a date.”

Kara nearly tripped over her own feet, and Lena laughed softly, stepping sideways to allow a respectable amount of space to grow between them again, although she didn’t let Kara have her hand back.

Oblivious, Faye stopped to open the last door in the hallway and ushered them in. “I thought we’d start with the toddler room,” she said. “Since this is would be Lizzy’s room if you decide to join us.”

Lizzy nearly dragged Kara inside, only to falter to a stop, eyes wide.

The room was alive with activity. There were blocks being stacked, cars whizzing down ramps, big beach balls being rolled, bounced on and tossed. An enormous sandbox and an equally large water table took up an entire corner of the room, with two toddlers very seriously scooping up the water in little cups and carrying it over to dump it into the sand while another child used a wooden spoon to mix it in. One little girl was spinning in circles, a colourful scarf fluttering in each hand, and another was making fairly credible motor noises and “driving” her way around the room using a basket for a steering wheel. There was a cozy little space draped in long swathes of fabric with pillows and a bookshelf, where one of the teachers was reading to a small group of children, and three round tables with tree stumps for chairs, set up for painting, some kind of sorting activity, and snack. The second teacher was on that side of the room, tying smocks and handing out cheese and crackers while tiny hands carefully poured milk from a plastic pitcher into wide rimmed cups.

Faye was chatting with Lena about Loose Parts, and Schemas, and something called Hi Mamma, but Kara tuned them out, crouching down beside the awestruck Lizzy. “Do you want to go and play?”

Lizzy nodded vigorously.

“Do you want me to come with you?”

A headshake this time.

“Okay.” Kara let go of her hand and Lizzy headed straight for the sandbox. There was some kind of
wordless debate over possession of the wooden spoon which was resolved when Lizzy took over the job of “stirrer,” while the other child started shovelling wet sand into a bucket.

“She seems to fit right in,” Faye said.

“Oh, sorry...” Kara stood up. “Should I not have let her go? I didn’t think to ask.”

“It’s okay.” Faye assured her. “We encourage parents to allow their children to engage in the rooms during a tour. That’s the only way to really know if it’s a good match. She’s more than welcome to play here while I show you the rest of the centre.”

Kara hesitated. Letting Lizzy out of their sight had gone wrong as often as it had gone right so far, but... she did seem to be having fun, and surely the teachers knew what they were doing. “What do you think?” she asked Lena.

“I think it’s a wonderful idea.” Lena didn’t seem to share Kara’s concerns, steering her gently, but firmly towards the door. “Come on, Mama,” she teased. “She’ll be fine.”

“I guess we could leave her for a few minutes...” Kara allowed herself to be persuaded, and she and Lena followed Faye back up the hallway.

They saw the infant room next, speaking in hushed tones to avoid waking the afternoon nappers, and then the preschool room, which was a little quiet than the toddler’s, but no less busy or engaging. After that Faye took them to what she called the Studios, three connected rooms where they ran their Before and After School programs.

These children were older, and they had full run of all three rooms, one set up for Science and Technology, one for Art, and one for Music and Drama, with costumes and a little stage, as well as a soundproof booth with instruments and recording equipment. The teachers here were assisting the children in their own self-directed projects, and according to Faye, they were scientists, artists and actors as well as teachers.

“It’s a Reggio-Emilia inspired curriculum,” she explained. “My co-director and I took a trip to Italy to visit the centres there a few years ago. We can’t replicate the program completely of course, but we’ve done our best.”

“I like it,” Kara said. “I would have loved to have a studio like that when I was a kid.”

“Are you an artist?” Faye asked, holding the door open for them.

“Not really. I paint a little, and I used to sculpt, but it’s just a hobby.”

“Nothing is ever just a hobby,” Faye scolded her, suddenly very fierce for such a small woman. “If you enjoy something, than you should take pride in it. Make a space for it in your life. Do you have space for passion, Kara?”

“I um...” Kara had no idea how to respond to that.

“We do have that spare room...” Lena added, all innocence and not helping at all. “Maybe we should convert it into a studio? I can have Jess arrange it.” She pulled her phone out of her purse.

“Uh...” Kara looked back and forth between the two women, one determined and the other looking way too pleased with herself for Kara’s liking. “Sure?”

“Good!” Faye turned neatly back around and headed down the hall. Apparently satisfied.
“We are not really converting the spare room!” Kara hissed at Lena, making a grab for the phone.

“But darling,” Lena said sweetly, green eyes damn near sparkling. “You need to make room for passion in your life.”

Kara didn’t miss the deliberate inflection, or the way Lena looked up at her through dark lashes. She wasn’t playing fair. “Fine.” Kara grumbled. “But no calling Jess!”

“If you insist.” Lena put her phone away. “I suppose you do enjoy doing your own heavy lifting,” she added suggestively.

“Stop that,” Kara mumbled, feeling her face heat.

“Stop what?”

“You know what!”

“I-“

Whatever Lena was about to say was cut off when Faye bustled back towards them.

“I’m sorry to interrupt,” she said, expression grave. “But there’s been an incident. Lizzy’s fine,” she hastened to assure them. “But we should have a word in my office.”


Kara nodded, and Lena followed Faye to her office while Kara detoured to the toddler room. She was prepared for glowing hands and frightened children, already calling herself an idiot for not thinking of that when she left Lizzy with strangers. She’d gotten so caught up in imagining what it would be like if they were really going to enroll their daughter here, that she’d almost forgotten why they’d come in the first place!

So she wasn’t surprised to open the door to chaos, but it wasn’t quite the mess she’d been expecting.

She looked for Lizzy first, and found her sitting in the middle of the carpet, her arms crossed and an expression of pure fury on her face. There was a teacher crouched down beside her who looked like she was trying to reason with her, but Lizzy was having none of it, shaking her head and sticking her lower lip out even farther.

Most of the disruption seemed to be coming from a little boy screaming at the top of his lungs across the room while another teacher held a bundle of Kleenex to his bleeding nose and a girl sobbing into the third teachers shoulder as she tried to round up the rest of the children who were taking advantage of this diversion by running quite thoroughly amok.

“What happened,” Kara asked, kneeling down on Lizzy’s other side.

“Lizzy?” The teacher asked.

“‘Izzy, hulp!” Lizzy insisted. The teacher sighed.

“As far as we can tell, she was trying to help,” she explained. “One of our boys has trouble sharing. He wanted another little girl’s toy so he pushed her down and took it and, well... Lizzy punched him in the nose and took it back for her.” The teacher didn’t seem like she was quite sure whether to be shocked or impressed. “I’ve been trying to convince her to apologize.”

“Oh...” Kara saw the teacher’s dilemma. On the one hand, she was appalled that her kid had hit
someone. On the other... that little brat probably had it coming. “Mind if I take her? I’ll bring her back to apologize once she’s calmed down.”

“Of course!” If anything the teacher looked relieved.

Kara scooped Lizzy up and took her to find Lena. This was a two parent problem. “Wait until your Mommy hears about this...”

Lena, had apparently already heard.

Faye excused herself, offering them a little privacy and the use of her office to talk to Lizzy.

Kara sat her down beside a basket of toys that Faye had thoughtfully provided to occupy children while she talked to their parents, and took Lena aside.

“What should we say...?” she asked.

“Vigilante justice is your area of expertise,” Lena pointed out. “Not mine.”

“The teacher wants her to apologize.”

Lena frowned. “The kid deserved it.”

“I know...but do we really want her taking the law into her own hands? I mean, she’s not even two.”

“Mommy?” Lizzy interrupted. “Mommy, d’is?” She held up a little plastic Xylophone, blue light flickering along her fingers and forming a glowing halo around the instrument.

“Thank you Lizzy,” Lena said, taking the toy and tucking it into her purse out of sight. “That’s one problem solved, but you’re still in trouble.”

Lizzy looked up at them, chin wobbling. “Izzy hulp...” she sniffed.

“Oh honey...” Kara knelt down beside her. “I know you wanted to help, but it’s not okay to hit people.”


“She has a point,” Lena offered when Kara just gaped, at a loss for words. “You’re not exactly a role model for pacifism.”

“How does she even know about that?”

“She knows you’re Supergirl.”

“Yeah, but I’m pretty sure she’s never seen me hit anyone.” Kara sighed. “Okay, I think this might be partially my fault. After she bit Mon El we had a talk about protecting people instead of hurting them, and the idea seems to have stuck. Lizzy,” she tried again. “I’m an adult, and it’s my job to keep you, and everyone else safe. Sometimes that means I have to fight, but only when there’s no other way. Do you understand?”


“Sure,” Kara said, figuring that was probably the best she was going to get. “When you’re all grown up you can help people with me, but until then, no hitting, okay?”
'Kay,” Lizzy agreed mollified.

“Are you ready to apologize?”

Lizzy wrinkled her nose but she nodded reluctantly.

“Good.” Kara held out her hand and Lizzy took it, sliding down off the chair. “I'll take her down to say sorry,” she told Lena. “Do they need us to sign anything?”

“There was an incident report,” Lena said, her expression still troubled for some reason. “I already signed it. Are you coming home with us, or do you need to fly?” She asked abruptly.

“I can come home...” Kara frowned. “Are you okay?”

“Fine.” Lena waved her off, already taking out her keys and pushing open the office door. “I'll meet you in the car.”

Kara wanted to follow her. Whatever she said, Lena was upset about something, but she had to finish this first. Tugging Lizzy after her, Kara went back to the Toddler room and made her own apologies to Faye and the other teachers while Lizzy said her grudging “s’ry” to the little boy with the bloody nose.

Faye was very gracious, and one of the teachers actually muttered that it was about time that kid got a fist to the nose, so it wasn’t quite as painful as it could have been, but she was still more than happy to leave the daycare behind.

Lena was quiet on the drive, and after a few failed attempts at conversation Kara left her alone, but once they were home, and Lizzy had run off to play in her room, she tried again. This time with an offering of coffee.

Lena took the cup, sitting down on the couch and drawing her legs up underneath her.

“You lied to her,” she said without prompting when Kara sat down beside her.

“Who?”

“Lizzy.” Lena didn’t lift her eyes from her coffee, watching the dark liquid swirl slowly around the cup.

Kara blinked, confused. “What? When?”

“You told her she could help you when she grows up,” Lena explained. “But she’s never going to grow up, is she?”

“Oh...” Kara sat back against the arm of the couch, feeling like she’d just swallowed a gut full of kryptonite. “I didn’t think...”

“You didn’t think?” Lena’s voice cracked. “Kara, what are we playing at? No matter what we...” she broke off, shaking her head. “She’s not real,” she whispered hoarsely.

“She is real!” Kara reached out but fell back when Lena flinched away from her. “Lena... I don’t care where she came from, she’s still our daughter.”

“But for how long?” Lena demanded. “Are you telling me you’re just going to let reality stay twisted? With aliens running wild, and people getting hurt? Are you willing to leave that talisman out there where it could fall into the wrong hands?”
“Are you?” Kara asked, shocked.

“Yes,” Lena said flatly. “If it meant keeping our daughter safe, and here, with us! I would.”

“I...” Kara felt tear pricking at her own eyes. “Lena I can’t...” She twisted her fingers together in her lap. “Maybe we won’t have to give her up... Maybe we can fix everything else, and—”

Lena cut her off with a sharp gesture. “Stop,” she said. “From the moment this started, all you’ve been able to think about is how to fix it.” She set her cup down on the table and stood up. “Did you even consider that maybe it’s not something that needs to be fixed?”

“Lena...” Kara tried to think of something else she could say, but Lena was right. She did need to fix this. She hoped, desperately, there would be a way for Lizzy to stay, but she couldn’t put her own happiness ahead of the lives and safety of other people. If she did that she wouldn’t be Kara anymore. She wouldn’t be the woman her mother had wanted her to be. “I’m sorry...”

“I know,” Lena said, wrapping her arms around herself, still not quite looking at Kara. “You’ll do what you have to do, even if it kills you, and I can’t even be angry with you, because that’s why I...” She closed her eyes. “Please just go. I know you can’t do anything about the morning, but please find somewhere else to sleep tonight. I need to be alone with my daughter.”

“Our daughter,” Kara corrected her softly, getting up and going to the balcony doors. She pushed them open but paused on the threshold and turned back. “You’re right,” she said. “I’ll do what I have to do, but if we lose her, there won’t be a reality, a world or a dimension where the person or being responsible will be able to hide, and when I catch him...”

“What?” Lena asked, finally looking at her, disbelief colouring her tone. “You’ll kill him?”

“No,” Kara said. “I’ll give him to you.”

Lena inhaled sharply, her eyes going wide, but she nodded.

“Say goodnight for me?” Kara asked.

“I will.”

Leaving felt like tearing herself in two, but Kara knew grief, and she knew loss, and she knew the pain of loving someone and hating them at the same time, and Lena had asked her to go. Launching herself into the sky, she flew higher and higher until the air was so thin that she could pretend the burning in her lungs was the reason she couldn’t breathe.

What good was the heart of a hero when it was breaking?

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry! I didn't mean to leave it like that, but this chapter went longer than I thought it would. Chapter 16 should be along next weekend.
Waiting is the Hardest Part

Chapter Summary

Kara gets some advice, Alex and Maggie are the best, Lena deals with a little temptation, and Lizzy sleeps through it all.

Chapter Notes

Yes! Still on schedule. :D

This is the last of what was supposed to be chapter 14... so much for my outline.

Thank you all for your comments and kudos! I think I'm mostly caught up on replies up to chapter 14. I have a few to go back to for the lovely new readers who have left comments on some of the preceding chapters, but that's hardly a chore. Thank you, and welcome to the party! :) 

Hope you all like this one. :)

Kara wasn’t sure how long she stayed out there on the edges of the breathable atmosphere. Long enough that she was nearly numb from the cold and the silence. Long enough that Alex’s windows were dark, her apartment still and quiet. Kara nearly turned back, reluctant to drop yet more of her problems in her sister’s lap, but she had nowhere else to go. Not with this. And Alex would kick her butt if she spent the night freezing it out in space.

Kara tried to be quiet, swooping in through her usual window and landing softly on the rug, but she’d forgotten about Maggie.

“Fuck! Damnit, Danvers!” Maggie yelped, shaking out her hand. “Tell your freaking sister to call first!”

“I’m so sorry!” Kara sped to the freezer and brought back an icepack. “I didn’t mean to scare you...”

“You didn’t scare me,” Maggie snarled, snatching the icepack out of her hands and pressing it to her knuckles with a sigh of relief. “If you’d been human, you’d be on the floor. You just surprised me is all. Don’t you know better than to sneak up on the people with guns?”

“What gun?” Kara felt the need to ask. “You punched me.”

“Yeah, well... I left it under my pillow,” Maggie admitted, grudgingly. “I was getting a drink of water, not checking the perimeter for intruders.”

“Kara...?” Alex mumbled, yawning and rubbing her eyes as she climbed out of bed.

“Sure,” Maggie snorted. “Sleep through the home invasion.”
“It’s Kara,” Alex explained, only half-awake. “She has a particular woosh sound. My brain knows who it is. What’s wrong?”

“Alex...” was all Kara got out before her voice broke and her vision blurred with unshed tears.

“Kara, honey...” Alex pulled her into a hug. “You’re freezing,” she scolded her. “Maggie, could you grab the comforter from the bed? First we’ll get you warmed up, and then you can talk.”

“Sure... my hand is broken, and she gets the hug?” Maggie complained, but she got the blanket.

“Your hand is fine,” Alex said, taking the blanket and wrapping it around Kara’s shoulders before pushing her down to sit on the couch. “If it was broken you wouldn’t be bitching this much.”

Kara let their familiar bickering wash over her, pulling the comforter closed under her chin. She was starting to shiver. Alex dragged Maggie into the kitchen and Kara heard the sounds of the kettle being filled and put on to boil, and the murmur of hushed voices just low enough that she could choose not to listen to them. Alex came back with a plate of cookies and a glass of milk.

“There will be hot chocolate in a minute, but here’s a sugar fix for now,” she said, setting them down on the coffee table.

Kara looked down at the cookies and felt the last of her defenses start to crumble.

“Hey...” Alex sat down beside her, wrapping an arm around her shoulders and pulling her close as the first tears spilled over. “It’s okay. Whatever it is, it’s going to be okay.”

“No it’s not,” Kara cried, burying her face in Alex’s chest. “It’s happening all over again. I’m going to lose them...”

“Lose who?”

Kara didn’t know whether to laugh or sob, nearly choking on the tangled knot in her throat. “My family... We’re going to catch Mxy, and Lizzy is going to disappear, and then Lena is going to h-hate me, and I don’t know what to do, because I’m supposed to be a hero, but I love them, and I w-want them, and it’s not fair, Alex!”

“Aw, shit kiddo...” Maggie sat down on her other side, and started rubbing her back.

“Fucking, hell,” Alex echoed.


“Remind me again,” Maggie said. “Because every time I stop thinking about it, I get hazy on this whole thing again. Why can’t you keep the kid?”

“That’s why,” Alex said softly. “Your memories, and most of National City’s have been distorted. Reality twists itself up around her. Not to mention the hoards of unruly aliens trying to find their very own magic lamp that we’ve been dealing with. People have already gotten hurt, and it’s only going to get worse until we fix it.”

“Huh...” Maggie thought about that for a minute. “Well then... Fuck reality.”

“What?”

“You heard me,” Maggie said. “Screw it, Kara. What has reality ever done for you? Your planet is gone, your family is dead, your cousin is a dick, and you’re still here, busting your ass for people
who don’t even know who you are. Who cares if a few thousand people think Lena Luthor married Cat Grant’s assistant three years ago, and gave birth to her alien baby? I think we’re all pretty sure it was going to happen anyway. The tabloids were just a little ahead of schedule.”

“But...” Alex blustered, while Kara just gaped. “What about the aliens attacking the city?”

“That’s our job.” Maggie poked Alex in the shoulder. “Come on, we can handle this. They want that magic talisman or whatever? Fine. We find it first and get your tech guy to lock it up tight in some kind of dampening field, and stash it at the DEO out of reach. They’ll give up eventually.”

“And if Mxyzptlk comes back after his banishment wears off?”

“Correct me if I’m wrong,” Maggie said. “But didn’t Kara handle him just fine last time? And we’ll have his magic-whatever it is. I know the whole Genie thing is just a story, and it’s not exactly a lamp, but we can use it against him, right?”

“I...”

“Look,” Maggie said. “I know you have this whole self-sacrifice thing going on Kara, but if you can stop making this about your damned survivor’s guilt for five minutes and think about it; whoever’s daughter she is or isn’t, this kid is here, alive and at least half human, and technically a citizen of National City, so doesn’t that make her one of those people you’ve sworn to protect?”

A little stunned by Maggie’s fervor, Kara nodded slowly.

“Then just fucking protect her, okay? And let us take care of the rest.”

“Alex?” Kara asked, almost too afraid to hope...


“Seriously?”

“Up high, Danvers.” Maggie grinned, high-fiving Alex over Kara’s head.

“Okay,” Kara whispered. “Okay,” she said again, more firmly. “Alex?”

“Yeah?”

“I have a family...”

Alex smiled. “You have a family, Kara.”

“You’re an aunt... and you too, Maggie. Eliza is a grandmother, and J’onnn will be like a grandfather, and Winn and James can be uncles, and I...” she gulped. “I’m a Mom...I have a daughter.”

“You’re just figuring that out?” Alex teased.

Kara shook her head. “It wasn’t real... I wasn’t letting it be real...” She shrugged out of the blanket, letting it fall to the couch as she stood up. “I have to go!”

She rushed to the window, only to double back and catch first Alex, and then Maggie in hugs just shy of bone-crushing before she left. “Thank you, both. So much!”

“No breaking the sound barrier!” Alex yelled after her.
She didn’t, but only because she was already so close to home.

*Home*

Kara savoured the word. Allowing herself to hope for the first time that it was true, that she finally had a place to belong, a place that was *hers*. Alex had made Earth something like a home. She had given Kara the closest thing she’d had to a family, but it wasn’t the same. Alex and Eliza and Jeremiah, they hadn’t *needed* Kara. They had accepted her, loved her, but she wasn’t *theirs*. Not really.

Family was about more than blood. But when all of those ties were just... *gone*. And then suddenly they *weren’t*.

It was more than she ever could have asked for.

The sun was just beginning to peak over the horizon when Kara touched down lightly on the balcony and crept inside on tip-toe, gently easing the doors closed behind her. She padded down the hall to the bedroom, slipping inside without a sound.

Lena was asleep in the bed with Lizzy sprawled beside her like a little starfish, one chubby arm wrapped tightly around her white dog, and the other around her tiger as she drooled into orange fur, snoring softly. Lena’s hand was on her back, her pale skin almost white against the dark blue sleeper, two silver rings gleaming faintly in the rising light from the window.

Kara twisted her own ring around her finger, wondering if Maggie was right. Would they really have gotten here on their own? She hoped so.

It seemed silly to change into pyjamas this close to morning, so Kara didn’t bother, settling for taking her shoes and sweater off before easing onto the bed and laying down facing Lena with Lizzy between them. She hadn’t launched herself of Alex’s balcony and raced all the way here to watch her family sleep, but now that she was here, she wasn’t quite ready to wake them up yet.

But...

Kara reached out to lay her hand gently on top of Lena’s, feeling the slight rise and fall of their daughter’s breath. “Lena...” she whispered, brushing her thumb over pale knuckles. “Can you wake up a little?”

Lena stirred at her voice and her touch, nose crinkling adorably as she blinked her eyes open. “Kara?”

“What?”

“Is it morning?”

“Not quite,” Kara admitted, hastening to add, “I came back to tell you something. You were right, and I’m an idiot.”

Lena’s hand under Kara’s closed into a fist around blue fabric, but she didn’t pull away. “Right *how*...?” she asked carefully.

“About keeping our daughter safe, and here with us,” Kara said. “And you were right too that I can’t put my own happiness first, but...” She smiled down at Lizzy. “I can put *her* first. *Her* life is something I can fight for.”
“What are you saying?”

Kara’s smile widened into a grin. “I’m saying the fifth dimension can have her back over my dead body.”

It wasn’t easy with Lizzy between them, but somehow Lena managed, pulling Kara into a fierce hug; one arm wrapped around her neck, and her face buried in Kara’s shoulder. “Thank you,” she breathed. “Thank you, thank you, thank you...”

Kara held her close, feeling Lena’s shoulders shaking under her arm. “Hey, it’s okay,” she said soothingly. “I’m just sorry I didn’t figure it out sooner. Are you sure you know what you’re signing up for, though?” she added jokingly. “This kid is half kryptonian. That could mean flying, laser vision, broken everything, and a lot of ruined birthday cakes...”

Lena shoved at her shoulder. “I don’t care,” she said, her voice muffled. “She’s ours. She could be covered in scales and breath fire, and I would still love her.”

“What about me, then?” Kara asked, hesitantly, all joking aside. “Do I... stay here with you? When Mxy is taken care of?”

Lena pulled back a little at that, frowning. “You really are an idiot,” she said.

“Yeah I know, but...” Kara took a deep breath. “Could you tell me anyway?”

Lena sat up, tugging Kara up with her. She took Kara’s left hand and held it up, pressing her own against it, three bands of silver, side by side, one glittering like starlight. “After all of this, do you really still think we wouldn’t have gotten here on our own, eventually?”

Kara blushed, eyes downcast. “It’s still new,” she admitted. “I didn’t know I... but you... you’re just... I’ve been so confused,” she finished with a huff, glancing up just in time to see Lena’s poorly hidden smirk. “You’re enjoying this,” she whined. “You’re the worst.”

Lena raised an eyebrow. “You haven’t exactly been innocent here either,” she countered. “But, you’re right. It’s new for you, and I’m not going to push you into anything you’re not ready for.” She took her hand back, tucking both of them neatly into her lap. “I can wait.”

Kara wasn’t sure she could wait, but Lena had a point. She didn’t quite have everything sorted out in her own head and heart yet. Still... “You don’t think you’ll regret it? Not doing this the right way? I mean, not just us, but Lizzy too... We’ve missed so much with her.”

“Regret missing three months of throwing up? Stretch marks and swollen ankles? Not to mention the constant crying, feeding and changing with a newborn?” Lena shuddered. “No thank you. I’d do it if I had to, but I’m not sorry about the workaround, and as for us... that depends. How long do you think it would have taken you to finally ask me out?”

More blushing... and also, “Wait a minute, why would I have to ask you?”

“Because I thought you were straight,” Lena explained, as if that should be obvious.

“I thought I was straight,” Kara grumped.

“Well.” Lena shrugged. “That answers that question. If we needed to get married before you were ready to question your sexuality, then I think this was exactly the right way, don’t you?”

Hard to argue with that logic.
“I guess we’re lucky she showed up then, huh?” Kara said, running her fingers through Lizzy’s unruly curls.

“Very lucky,” Lena agreed. “She has your eyes, you know,” she said, smiling down at the sleeping toddler. “That’s how I knew she was really ours. The apartment, the pictures...” She waved a hand as if to indicate the general disarray of reality. “I could have explained those away, but I see you, when she looks at me.”

“My father’s eyes,” Kara said softly. “Kal and I both have them. She has your chin though,” she added. “And your brains.”

“Best of both worlds then.” Lena’s grin was impish.

“And the worst,” Kara added feelingly. “I can’t believe she punched that little boy! And the kitchen yesterday? Did you teach her that trick with standing on the books?”

Lena laughed. “No, she figured that one out on her own, but I’ll admit, I may have... encouraged her.”

Kara sighed. “She really is our kid, isn’t she?”

“Yeah,” Lena said. “She really is.”

“Guess we’re stuck with her, then.”

“I guess we are.”

“It’s not going to be easy...” Kara warned her. “We still have to find the rest of the talisman and protect the city and then find a way to put it together and hide it while we figure out how to use it against Mxy...”

“And don’t forget the Gala,” Lena added, feigning seriousness. “We have appearances to keep up after all.”

“Ugh!” Kara collapsed back on the bed, hands over her face. “I forgot about the Gala. I still have so much to organize!”

“You can borrow Jess,” Lena offered, leaning over her and tugging one of her hands down. In spite of her promise to wait, she couldn’t quite seem to resist tangling their fingers together and resting them on Kara’s chest. “I still need to get back at her for pretending to be under the spell with everyone else, anyway. She hates this sort of thing.”

“Are you sure we can’t just skip it?” Kara asked hopefully, dropping her other hand to cover their joined ones, just in case Lena was thinking about taking hers back.

“Think of it as your coming out party,” Lena teased, laughing and holding on tight when Kara tried to cover her face again to hide her blush.

Kara could have overpowered her easily, but she liked this playful side of Lena too much to discourage her. Instead, she let Lena “win,” catching each of Kara’s hands in one of hers and pinning them to the bed to either side of her. Lena’s smirk told Kara she knew exactly what she was doing, but she played along, feigning surprise when Kara turned the tables by tugging her down on top of her.

“Oof, I thought we were waiting...” Lena whispered, her voice suddenly gone husky and green eyes
“Maybe I don’t want to wait,” Kara breathed, heat pooling in her belly, nerves forgotten, or at least ignored. Lena felt amazing pressed against her, all warm curves and soft skin, and like nothing she’d ever had before.

“Kara...” Lena whined, closing her eyes and dropping her head against Kara’s shoulder. “As much as I would love to take you up on that,” she mumbled. “And I would. I mean honestly, you have no idea, but we have a toddler in the bed, and precocious as she is, I’d rather wait to have that conversation until she’s out of diapers, wouldn’t you?”

“Well if you put it that way...” Kara sighed. “Darnit.”

“I can think of more colourful words,” Lena drawled, sitting up reluctantly. “But essentially, yes, my feeling as well.”

Kara propped herself up on her elbows, unable to resist a pouting a little. “Raincheck?”

“Definitely.” Lena winked. “But for now...” she stooped and pressed a swift kiss to Kara’s cheek before pulling away again. “I’m going to remove myself from temptation and get ready for work.” She slipped from the bed and headed for the bathroom. “Are you with Alex today? Or has Snapper finally pinned you down?”

Kara stared after her, fingers pressed to her cheek where she could still feel the press of Lena’s lips. “I uh...um...” she stuttered. “Alex is still in interrogation today I think. I was going to drop Lizzy off with Eliza and go in to Catco...”

“Meet me for lunch?” Lena asked, pausing in the doorway. “We could eat in...” She caught her lower lip between her teeth, releasing it slowly as the corner of her mouth tilted up in a suggestive grin.

Kara nearly choked on her own tongue. “You are having way too much fun with this,” she said weakly when she had mostly recovered.

“Is that a yes?”

“That’s a yes.”

“Good.”

Satisfied she’d left Kara in as flustered a state as possible, Lena retreated into the bathroom and shut the door. After a few seconds Kara heard the shower come on, and she flopped back down onto the bed beside Lizzy with a sigh. “Kid,” she said. “Your mother is trying to kill me.”

Lizzy just snored.

Kara snorted. “Yeah, figures you’d take her side.”

It was going to be a long morning.
Taking a Walk

Chapter Summary

Lena and Kara need a little help. Alex and Winn are the best, Eliza is super, and Lizzy makes new friends.

Chapter Notes

Okay, it's a long weekend over here... so this is still the weekend. :)

This is a little longer than my usual, but I refused to chop it up. So enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

With the shower running and the bathroom door closed firmly behind her, Lena slid slowly down the wall to the floor, her hands shaking and tears stinging the corners of her eyes. Pulling her knees up to her chest, she let her head drop forwards and just focused on breathing until her heart stopped hammering quite so hard, and the roaring in her ears settled to a dull hum.

It wasn’t a panic attack.

Not quite.

And she wasn’t upset. Rather the opposite. Which was why it was so frustrating.

It was just... She had been ready to lose it all. She had accepted it. After all, she’d already lost her real mother, her father, her brother’s love and respect, and any hope that Lillian had ever felt anything more for her than contempt. She’d lost Kara, before she ever had her, and now a child...

Lena knew how to handle loss. She knew how to take that pain, so sharp it left her bleeding and turn it into strength.

She had no idea what to do with this.

What did that say about her?

Nothing good, probably.

She had taken her phone from the bedside table before she fled. Lena gripped it tightly between her hands, glad she’d put the number into her contacts so that she didn’t have to attempt to actually dial.

Alex picked up on the third ring. “Lena?” she said, voice rough and a little groggy.

“Tell me it’s real,” Lena choked out, trying to whisper because shower or no shower, she was living with a kryptonian. A kryptonian she hoped was polite enough not to eavesdrop, but still. “Tell me Kara was with you last night, and you talked some sense into her, or out of her...”
“What happened?” Alex sounded more awake now. “Are you all right?”

“I’m fine,” Lena lied. “Just tell me, please.”

“Okay. Just a minute...” Lena heard quiet murmuring in the background, and then Alex was back. “She was here, I mean, I’m pretty sure she spent most of the night freezing her ass off in space as some kind of penance, but we saw her after that. Why? Didn’t she come home?” Alex demanded.

“No, no, she’s here.” Lena assured her. “It’s just... is it real? Can we really keep her?”

“Okay,” Alex said, all of her sharp edges softening. “Oh, Lena... Yeah. That’s what we’re hoping. We have a plan. I’ve already talked to Winn and J’onn and they’re on board. Didn’t Kara tell you?”

“She did, I mean, she told me she was going to try but it...”

“Sounded too good to be true?” Alex said, both sympathy and understanding clear and warm in her voice. “I get that. And I know that the thought of being happy, really happy, can be terrifying, but Lena? They’re worth it.”

“I know.” Lena exhaled slowly, breathing in calm and control. “I know. Thank you, Alex. I didn’t know who else to call...”

“No problem. What are sisters for, right?”

Lena laughed softly. “Right.”

“Still,” Alex added. “You can go to Kara with this stuff too. She’s more than just sunshine and muscles.”

“I know,” Lena admitted. “I just... She believes in me. I don’t want her to think I’m-”

“Broken?”

“Is that awful?”

“No, no that’s human.” Alex sighed. “I’ve done that too; run away and shut her out. And do you know what she did?”

“What?” Lena asked, suspecting she already knew the answer.

“She came after me. When I locked the door she flew in through the window and even though she couldn’t fix it, just knowing she was there, that she would always be there, gave me hope.”

“She loves you,” Lena said, both in awe and a little envious of what they had in each other.

Alex chuckled. “She’s pretty fond of you too. So...since we’re being so sisterly... what else did Kara tell you? Come on, I want details.”

Lena leaned back against the wall, the last of her panic giving way to a sort of nervous thrill. “Well, apparently she’s not entirely straight after all...”

“Hah! I knew it, tell me everything.”

*****

Somehow, Lena made it through most of the morning without losing her mind. She did make a point
of torturing Jess, just a little, with pointless errands and unnecessary paperwork, until the Secretary finally stalked into her office and slammed Lena’s latest request (a new stapler,) down on the desk beside her already perfectly functional stapler, and crossed her arms with a huff.

“You know!”

Lena ignored her pique, calmly finishing the last few lines of her email before sending it and closing her laptop. “I do,” she said, resting her elbows on the desk and steepling her fingers. “The question is, why didn’t I know, you knew?”

Jess sighed, some of the tension leaving her shoulders. “I didn’t,” she admitted. “Not immediately.”

Lena leaned back in her chair and gestured for Jess to sit. “When did you figure it out?”

Jess sat down primly, hands in her lap. “When Ms. Danvers and the child came to see you the first time, I didn’t question it.” She said. “It was only afterwards, when they were gone, that I realized something was wrong. It was like waking up from a dream and not being sure if it had been real or not, only the feeling didn’t go away.”

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

Jess shrugged. “I wanted to, but... I didn’t know what to say at first, and then I wasn’t sure if you knew what was going on. I was aware of Ms. Danvers’ alternate identity, and I was worried that this was something she had done, or caused to be done, because of her association with you. I decided to wait and see until I could be sure of her intentions.”

“And you didn’t think I needed to know any of that?”

“You already knew she was Supergirl,” Jess pointed out, her tone leaving no room for Lena to deny it. “The rest...” she shook her head. “You were happy Ms. Luthor. If there was a chance any of this was real, and not some trick? How could I take that away from you?”

Lena swallowed past a sudden lump in her throat. Was she ever going to stop being surprised that people actually cared about her? Probably not. “So you talked to Kara?”

“She was messing it up!” Jess said, feelingly. “I don’t know exactly what’s going on here Ms. Luthor, but whatever it is, it’s good for you. So as long as we’re not all about to die horribly as a result, I hope the two of you aren’t planning on doing something stupid like undoing it.”

Lena still couldn’t quite believe that wasn’t the plan anymore, but she was relieved she didn’t have to explain that to her secretary. Having one more person who wouldn’t think they were crazy helped too. “Not that stupid, no,” she said with a smile.

“Good.” Jess smoothed out her skirt and stood up. “If that’s everything, Ms. Luthor?”

Lena raised an eyebrow. “That’s it? You don’t have any other questions?”

Jess hesitated. “Can I expect that watching Miss. Lizzy will be one of my regular duties going forward?” She asked finally, looking and sounding very much like someone inquiring into exactly when and how they’re going to die.

Lena laughed. “No,” she assured her. “We’ve secured a temporary nanny, and if everything works out, we’ll be making other arrangements. I did however, promise Kara that you would help her with the last minute details for the Gala...”
Jess wrinkled her nose. “I suppose that’s fair. Are you expecting Ms. Danvers for lunch today?”

“Yes.” Lena busied herself at her desk to hide the sudden nervous flutter of excitement in her belly. Was she blushing? Surely not.

“Shall I send for something healthy?”

“No,” Lena said, unable to resist the urge to spoil Kara a little, or a lot... “I think we can make an exception this once. Order a Pizza, and Jess?”

“Yes, Ms. Luthor?”

“We’re not to be disturbed unless the building is burning down, understood?”

“Perfectly,” Jess said with just the barest hint of a rather unprofessional smirk. “Ms. Luthor?” she added on her way out.

“Yes?”

“I’m happy for you.”

Lena’s hands stilled in their aimless shuffling of papers. “Thank you Jess,” she said softly. “For that and for...” She hesitated, not quite sure exactly how to thank someone for not only liking you enough, but also knowing you well enough to be able to see through your wonderfully twisted reality and then lie to you about it for your own good. “Everything,” she decided.

Jess’ smirk softened into a smile. “You’re welcome,” she said, and left the office with a promise to have the Pizza delivered to her desk at one.

Lena opened her laptop up again, but she couldn’t focus on the next email, her fingers drumming restlessly on the edge of the desk, and her gaze sneaking to the clock in the lower right corner every few seconds.

Was it lunchtime yet?

*****

“This is crazy, right?” Kara demanded, stepping neatly out of the way as Winn rolled his chair between monitors, tapping madly at the keypad in his lap. “I mean... I’m a junior reporter, I have this whole gig,” She gestured to her super-suit. “And now I’m a mom? I can’t be a mom Winn... I have no mom-skills. I can’t even get the kid to wear socks!”

“Squad two, you’re in position,” Winn said, hitting a few more keys before flipping his microphone up. “Kara, I don’t know what to tell you, and I’m kind of in the middle of something here...”

“And then there’s Lena!” Kara tangled her fingers in her hair, pacing back and forth, cape snapping as she turned. “She’s the perfect mom, and beautiful, and smart and ugh! What am I doing!”

“Not listening apparently...” Winn muttered under his breath, changing the angle on one of his cameras and sending Squad three their new coordinates. “Isn’t this what you wanted?” He added at a more normal volume.

“I did!” Kara whined. “I do! But what if I’m awful at it?”

“The mom thing or the wife thing?”
“Both?”

Winn shrugged, spinning his chair around. All the squads were in position, he had a few minutes before he’d need to maneuver them out again. “Then you’re awful at it, but you keep trying, and eventually you won’t suck quite so much.”

Kara snorted, dropping down into the other chair and crossing her arms. “Nice pep talk.”

“Happy to help. What are you even doing here by the way? I thought you were at Catco today.”

“I was, but Snapper wants me to include something on the recent rise in Alien crime rate in my story and I came to talk to Alex, but she’s still in interrogation.”

“Yeah that guy they brought in yesterday is talking non-stop, but he doesn’t speak any of the languages in our database. J’onn says he can’t touch his mind either, so they’re trying pictures today.” He reached out and dragged her chair closer so that they were knee-to-knee. “Now come on, are you seriously worried about being a good mom? Because that kid adores you. The rest of it you can learn.”

“What if I regret it?” Kara asked. “What if we do this, and we keep Lizzy, and everything is perfect, only I suddenly realize I wasn’t ready? That I don’t want to be a wife and mother at twenty-five?”

“I don’t think anyone is ever really ready to be a parent, Kara.”

“You know what I mean!”

“Yeah...” Winn admitted. “I know, but what’s the alternative? Do you really want to walk away?”

“No!” Kara said immediately, unable to even imagine abandoning Lizzy and Lena. “No, I don’t. It’s just...”

“A lot?” Winn finished for her, chuckling at her answering grimace. “No shit, Kara. It’s one thing to want something, it’s a whole different thing to actually get it, and then have to figure out what to do with it... have you talked to Lena about this?”

“Um... no?” Kara admitted. “She was so happy, and there’s that whole...not straight thing, and she says she doesn’t mind waiting until I figure things out, but when I’m with her I feel like I have them figured out until she goes away and then I...”

“Panic?”

“Yeah.” She winced. “Is that bad?”

“That’s normal,” Winn assured her. “You’re questioning your whole identity here. There’s going to be a little panic, but you’re happy too? I mean, we’re talking Lena Luthor, here. She is way out of your league,” he teased.

“I know, right?” Kara couldn’t keep what was undoubtedly a big dopey grin off her face. “She’s kind of amazing.”

“And you should definitely go tell her that,” Winn said, turning back around to his monitors as everything suddenly started flashing read and his headphones erupted with gunfire and yelling. “Only not right now, because our small fluffy alien capture just grew ten feet, and an extra head. A little help?”
“On it,” Kara said, sliding her earpiece in and leaving the chair spinning madly behind her as she took off for the exit. She should have just enough time to save some DEO butt before lunch.

*****

Assuming Kara would show up in a cape, Lena had left the balcony door open. The fresh air was lovely, but the distraction of every errant gust of wind that could have heralded the arrival of a superhero was hell on her productivity. At noon, annoyed with her complete inability to focus, she finally got up and closed it. At twelve-thirty, having decided that it was ridiculous for Lena Luthor to be defeated by something as silly as a breeze, she opened it again and sat back down at her desk, telling herself sternly to focus.

So when there was a knock on the door just before one, she wasn’t expecting to find Kara in a blue sundress and a lacy white cardigan on the other side of it.

“Oh,” she said, brilliantly. “I thought you would be...” she gestured vaguely in the direction of the balcony.

“Uh...did you want me too...? I could-” Kara took a step back and Lena hurried to reassure her.

“No! No, you’re fine. Sorry. It’s been a long morning. Come in, please. You didn’t have to knock.” Lena held the door open, biting her tongue to stave off further babbling.

“Yeah I know, I just...wanted to do this properly, I guess?” Kara stepped into the office and turned, holding out a bouquet of bright white daisies. “These are for you. They’re not anything fancy, but I thought they looked cheerful, and-”

“They’re lovely.” Lena interrupted smoothly, regaining a little of her aplomb in the face of Kara’s obvious nerves. “Thank you.” She took the flowers, enjoying the faint blush that stained Kara’s cheeks when their fingers brushed. “Would you like a drink?”

“Yes, please.” Kara looked relieved to be on more familiar footing, hanging her purse on the coat rack and sitting down on the couch. “Just water, thank you.”

Lena got a vase for the flowers and set them on her desk, touched by the simple gesture that hinted this was more than a lunch between friends. Not, that she hadn’t sent Kara flowers before of course, but then it had never been just friends for her. Following Kara’s example, she poured herself a glass of water as well and joined her on the couch. “Jess ordered a Pizza,” she said, handing Kara her drink. “It should be here soon.”

“We’re having Pizza!?” Kara’s grin was worth all the extra calories Lena was about to consume.

“Well, this is something of a celebration, isn’t it?” Lena asked, shifting a little closer.

Kara gulped. “I guess?”

“You don’t sound so sure...” Lena tried to say it as a tease, but inwardly she was asking herself how the hell she’d managed to ruin this already.

Kara set her glass on the table and turned to face Lena on the couch, hands tangled together in her lap. “I wasn’t,” she admitted. “I should probably tell you... I might have had a minor freak out this morning.”

Lena twisted the rings on her finger, trying not to assume the worst as she asked “About us?”
Kara nodded. “About us, and Lizzy and being *moms*...” She adjusted her glasses, looking down at her lap. “I’m scared, I guess, that we might be jumping into something before we were ready.”

“Oh.” Looking at it from Kara’s perspective, Lena couldn’t blame her for reconsidering things. It was a wonder she’d even considered them in the first place. “I suppose we shouldn’t drag it out then...” She started to stand up, ready to make this as graceful an ending as possible, but Kara stopped her with a hand around her wrist, expression suddenly stricken.

“What? No, I’m sorry— I shouldn’t have led with that! I *wasn’t* sure, and I *did* kind of freak out, but then I imagined what it would be like, *not* to have you and Lizzy, and that was so much worse than being worried about doing it *wrong!* So all I wanted to say was, I might not be very good at this, and you’re going to have to be patient with me, but I’m in Lena. I’m in this with you, and with Lizzy. I want this.” She hesitated, and then continued with a stubborn set to her chin. “I want you. You’re wonderful, and brilliant, and beautiful, and I don’t care if it’s hard. You’re worth it.”

That was... Damnit, that was everything Lena had ever wanted to hear, and so much more than she had expected. She gave in to the tugging on her wrist and sat back down, struggling to get her emotions back under control as Kara took her hands. “This is probably where I admit I didn’t exactly handle things very well this morning either,” she said, watching Kara’s thumbs sweep over her knuckles. “I called your sister.”

“You called Alex?” Kara sounded surprised. “Why?”

“Because I don’t know how to be happy,” Lena admitted. “I’m always looking for the catch, always preparing to fall. And the happier I am...” She squeezed Kara’s hands. “I panicked.”

“Why didn’t you tell me?” Kara asked softly.

“It was silly.”

“Hey,” Kara let go of one of her hands to tip Lena’s chin up, fingers soft and warm against her skin. “Your feelings are never *silly*, okay? If you’d rather talk to Alex, that’s fine. I’m really glad she was there for you. But I’m always here if you need me. *Always.*”

Lena smiled. “That’s what Alex said.”

Kara’s answering smile was like the sun coming out from behind the clouds. “Yeah, well she’s usually right, but don’t tell her I said that. She’s bossy enough already.”

Lena laughed, feeling the anxious tension dissipate as a new and much more interesting tension took its place. Kara’s fingers lingered on the line of her jaw, and she bit her lip, smugly satisfied when Kara’s eyes instantly widened and fixed on her mouth. She wasn’t prepared however, for the pad of Kara’s thumb to brush over her bottom lip, gently easing it free of her teeth.

“That’s not playing fair,” Kara said, voice low and teasing, if a little shaky. “I can never think when you do that.”

“Do you need to think for this?” Lena asked archly, trying to pretend that her own ability to form a cohesive thought hadn’t just taken a direct hit.

Kara leaned a little closer, sliding her hand back to tangle in the hair at the nape of Lena’s neck. “You might have a point...”

Lena was just about to do something about the last little bit of distance between them when a knock on the door made her drop her forehead to Kara’s shoulder instead. “I am going to *murder* whoever
that is,” She growled.

Kara laughed. “Not if they have my pizza, you’re not!” She freed her hand from Lena’s hair, earning herself another grumble of complaint and left her on the couch to answer the door.

Lena tried not to resent pizza in general and this pizza in particular, but it was difficult.

Kara thanked Jess, all sunshine and cheer, with no sign of murderous rage or thwarted yearning, and Lena hated her a little bit for that. She was still grinning when she brought the pizza over and set it down on the coffee table. Lena glared at her, but Kara just sat back down beside her and opened the box.

“Ooh! Extra cheese!”

“You’re really just going to eat lunch?” Lena demanded, ego a little bruised to say the least.

Kara paused with a slice of pizza halfway to her mouth. “Yes?” She said hesitantly. “Aren’t you hungry?”

“I…” Lena cut herself off with a sigh, all of her frustration melting away at the adorable look of puppy-ish confusion on Kara’s face. “Yes I am,” she said instead, snuggling into Kara’s side and tucking her feet up under her before reaching for a slice of pizza. This was good too, and they had plenty of time to get to the rest of it.

They spent the rest of lunch eating pizza and chatting about inconsequential things. Jess kept her promise and didn’t interrupt them again, but while Lena could still feel the potential for more to come simmering between them, she was willing to let Kara set the pace.

At two, Lena reluctantly let her go, amused when Kara hesitated at the door, shifting nervously on her toes before leaning in, faster than thought, to give Lena a quick kiss on the cheek. Blushing furiously, she stammered a goodbye and fled, leaving Lena alone with an empty pizza box and a long and uncomfortable afternoon ahead of her.

*****

At four thirty, Kara texted Lena to say that she would be meeting Eliza and Lizzy in the park to look for the next section of the talisman at five, and invited her to join them. She added a heart emoji and a winky face, which was either Kara just being Kara, or a subtle tease. After a very frustrating afternoon, Lena was inclined to think it was the latter.

Lena texted her back a confirmation, and wrapped up her work for the day. A walk in the park actually sounded lovely, and with any luck, Lizzy would be tired enough for an early bedtime.

Eliza welcomed her warmly when Lena joined them at the hot dog stand just outside the entrance to the park. Lizzy was nearly quivering with anticipation as the vendor prepared their food, and Kara wasn’t much better. Eliza rolled her eyes at them fondly.

“I’m glad you could join us,” she said, pulling Lena into a brief hug. “These two won’t be good for anything until they’ve stuffed themselves, and I for one, enjoy a little conversation with my food.”

“Hey!” Kara protested, eyes still on her hot dog. “I can talk and eat.”

“Please don’t,” Eliza begged her, picking Lizzy up and carrying her, along with her hot dog, over to a nearby picnic table.
Lena laughed at Kara’s wounded expression, stepping closer and taking her hand. “Pizza and Hot dogs?” she asked, weaving their fingers together.

Kara pouted. “Aren’t we still celebrating?”

“I can think of better ways,” Lena whispered in her ear, unable to resist a little revenge.

Kara shivered, but she glanced back towards the food, clearly torn. Lena laughed again and released her with a grin. “Go, and eat then.”

“Do you want one?”

Lena shuddered. “No, thank you. I’m fine.”

Once Kara and Lizzy had eaten, the four of them wandered into the park. Lizzy and Kara running ahead, bounding on and off the path and generally being ridiculous, while Lena and Eliza strolled along behind them at a much more sedate pace. Eliza shared a few stories about teenaged Kara and Alex, promising Lena the recipe for her famous Chocolate Pecan pie, and repeating her offer to stay and help them out with Lizzy as long as they needed her.

“Thank you,” Lena said, sincerely. “I think my secretary may have quit if I’d asked her again.

Eliza chuckled. “She has her moments, I’ll admit. But Kara says you’ve decided to try and keep her?”

Lena nodded, tensing in anticipation of Eliza’s disapproval, but the other woman surprised her again.

“I think that’s wonderful. She’s a lovely little girl, and you both seem to care very much for her. I trust my daughters to weigh the cost of their choices in life, but sometimes they could stand to be a little more selfish. I’m glad they have you and Maggie to remind them that it’s not all about saving the world.” She smiled. “And what about you and Kara? Don’t think I didn’t notice something’s different there...”

Lena shook her head, still not quite used to this family and their well-meaning nosiness. “We’re figuring it out.”

“Good,” Eliza said. “Now tell me all about this company of yours. Kara says your thinking of hiring alien scientists and engineers for your R&D department?”

They talked business all the way to the duck pond, pausing when Lizzy pulled Kara off the path to examine about three hundred different identical leaves on a little bush until she found one that glowed blue when she touched it.

“B’ue!” she said proudly, clearly embracing this special power her mothers got so excited about. She pulled the leaf off the bush and carefully handed it to Kara, who put it away in one of the little bags Winn had given them and gave it to Lena for safekeeping.

With at least another hour of daylight left, they decided to finish their walk, and Eliza had some surprisingly helpful advice for Lena about integrating human and non-human needs and ideas, and offering her services if she needed a consultant on adapting alien medical and biological technology for human use. “Alex would be invaluable there too,” she added, sitting down on a bench to watch Kara and Lizzy feed the ducks crackers that Eliza had brought with them for just that purpose. “But I think the DEO keeps her fairly busy.”

“I’ll let you know,” Lena said, sitting beside her. “I would love to have you on my team, but I don’t
want to keep you from your home.”

Eliza shrugged. “There’s not much left in Midvale for me anymore. My girls are here, and not likely to leave any time soon, and now that I have a granddaughter...” she shook her head. “It’s something to think about, once this business with the imp is dealt with.”

“How did they beat him last time?” Lena asked, suddenly realizing that she didn’t actually know all the details. It was easy to forget that there had been a time when Kara and Supergirl were separate people in her life, but Lena hadn’t even known about Mxyztlk until all of this started.

“Well the only way to be sure of banishing fifth dimensional beings,” Eliza explained. “Is to make them say their names backwards. I know,” she added at Lena’ disbelieving expression. “It sounds ridiculous, but it works. This one has apparently pestered her cousin before, and he’s clever, but Kara managed to trick him into writing his name backwards in Kryptonian script.”

“And that worked?”

“Apparently,” Eliza said. “She’s lucky even his written name had enough power to send him back.”

“Was he really in love with her?”

“Who knows. I don’t suppose it really matters. He cared enough to do whatever she said to stop the self-destruct on her cousin’s ice-fortress. I heard he promised her riches, world peace, an end to hunger... anything to make her happy. Though I doubt he ever would have been able to stick to it. His kind are born to make trouble.”

Lena snorted. “Sounds familiar,” she said, watching Lizzy confuse the hell out of a mother duck by coaxing her brood of ducklings to follow the little girl instead. The tiny yellow balls of fluff seemed thrilled, peeping excitedly and running in circles after Lizzy with their small, useless wings stretched out. Kara was on the ground laughing, while the poor mother duck quacked what was probably a string of avian profanity and chased after them.

The fun ended when Lizzy glanced back once too often and forgot to look where she was going, running straight off the bank and into the pond. The sudden splash and indignant wail alerted Kara to the danger, and she took off over the water to fish Lizzy out, holding the soaking wet and liberally coated with pond-slime toddler out at arm’s length as she landed back on dry ground.

“Oh my...” Eliza looked like she was trying not to laugh. “I think that’s my cue to retire for the evening. Best of luck, girls.”

“Izzy, wet!” Lizzy cried, more insulted than hurt.

“I should probably get that leaf back to the DEO,” Kara hedged, trying to hand her to Lena.

“Oh, no!” Lena took a giant step back, holding her hands up. “I’m not putting her in my car smelling like that. You can fly her home.”

Kara sighed. “Come on, kid.” She winced as she cradled the soggy, stinking toddler to her chest and took a quick look around to make sure they didn’t have an audience before leaping into the sky.

Lena followed in the car after walking back through the park and bidding Eliza a quick goodbye. By the time she got home, the bathroom was a wreck, and Kara was the one who was drenched, but Lizzy was clean and sweet smelling again, and in her favourite tiger pyjamas, ready for her story.

“Now, you can take the leaf to Winn,” Lena told a dripping Kara. “And remember rule number
“No wet Superheroes in the bed,” Kara recited wearily before taking the bag and flying out again.

Lena felt a little guilty as she read Lizzy “Where the Wild Things Are,” and put her to bed, hanging over the crib to rub her back until she drifted off, but it wasn’t as if she could have flown to the DEO. They were going to need to get Lizzy a real bed soon. She was outgrowing the crib. The thought was both exhilarating and terrifying. Their little girl was going to grow up...

Kara wasn’t back by the time Lena got ready for bed herself, but Lena heard her drop in through the balcony doors as she was picking her book up off the nightstand. She must have showered and changed at the DEO, because she was wearing nondescript black sweatpants and a tank top, and she was mostly dry when she stumbled into the bedroom and collapsed on her side of the bed, muttering nearly inarticulately about Winn and late-night experiments.

Lena sighed and put her book down. “At least get under the covers,” she said, tugging the blankets out from underneath Kara.

Kara refused to cooperate. “Don’t wanna sleep...” she complained, eyes barely open.

“You didn’t get any last night,” Lena reminded her. “Even superheroes need their rest.”

Kara just grumbled.

“Come here...” Lena nagged and pulled on her until Kara was half in her lap, arms wrapped around Lena’s waist. She arranged the blankets over both of them, and Kara snuggled into her stomach, muttering contentedly this time.

Lena ran her fingers through damp blond curls, not entirely displeased with how their night had turned out, even if she’d been hoping for something a little different. She picked her book back up, thumbing through it to where she’d left off, and settled back against the headboard.

She had a peacefully sleeping child just down the hall, a good book to read, and her beautiful, Kryptonian wife in her lap.

Happiness wasn’t so bad after all.

Chapter End Notes

I know, I know! I’m not dragging this out on purpose I swear. We’ll get there very soon now!
Taking the Lead

Chapter Summary

Kara has an uncomfortable day at work, Lena is evil, Lizzy still hates shoes, and the space family is adorable. Also, there's a party.

Chapter Notes

Oh boy... this... this needs a warning for extreme amounts of fluff. Seriously guys. Read responsibly.

Also, this is where we start to earn that M, rating, so heads up. I know there was at least one nine-year-old reading this at one point. After this chapter we have firmly left General Audiences behind. ;)

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The last day before the Gala was something of a whirlwind.

Lizzy was up before the alarm, yelling about breakfast and ducks from her crib, and rattling the bars at a volume that suggested any delay in her liberation was likely to result in mutiny and possible escape.

“Would it kill her to sleep past sunrise?” Kara grumbled into the pillows. They’d shifted in the night, Kara rolling onto her side, and Lena tucking in behind her.

“Welcome to motherhood,” Lena murmured lazily, nuzzling in closer before pressing a kiss to the back of Kara’s neck that did more to wake her up than half a dozen screaming toddlers ever could. “Go back to sleep for a few minutes. I’ll get her.”

“No, stay...” Kara twisted around and reached after her, but Lena had already detangled herself and slipped out of bed. “Ugh...” she flopped back. “You’re too fast.”

“This from the woman who can outrun bullets?” Lena raised an eyebrow as she combed her fingers through her sleep tousled hair and pulled it up into a messy knot.

Kara pouted. “Bullets are easy.”

“Well,” Lena drawled, bending over her. “If you’re not too tired when you come home tonight, you might find out that when it comes to a certain superhero...” she leaned closer, and Kara gulped as Lena whispered into her ear, voice gone low and rough, “so am I.”

She winked as straightened, and Kara felt her face flush bright red.

“No fair,” she whined.
Lena shrugged. “If you wanted fair, you shouldn’t have married a Luthor.”

“I didn’t, I- you-” Kara spluttered after her but Lena was already gone, the bright chirrup of Lizzy’s voice greeting her in the nursery across the hall.

Kara groaned and pulled the blankets back over her head. If she hadn’t been ready before, she was definitely ready now. Stupid hormones. Stupid work.

All in all, it wasn’t the most comfortable way to start a morning. She was restless and fidgety all through her early content meeting, until even James was giving her strange looks. Snapper either didn’t notice, or didn’t care, probably the latter, but that didn’t stop him from chewing her out over the lack of progress on her story. Getting lectured by her boss however, turned out to be a fairly effective damper on other... less productive, thoughts, and Kara was feeling somewhat more focused when she flew over to the DEO to talk to Alex.

“Please tell me you’ve gotten something out of this guy,” she said when she found J’onn in the observation room watching while Alex questioned the alien who was still the only person they had who was willing to talk. He didn’t look dangerous. He was small and skinny, with a grey-ish pallor to his skin that could have been as much because of poor health and nutrition as his species.

J’onn nodded. “We found a translator.” He indicated the other woman sitting at the table with Alex. This one was bright blue, with an extra set of eyes and pointed teeth. “She’s not fluent, but their planets were in neighboring solar systems. She’s heard the language before.”

“So what is he saying?”

“He’s saying plenty, but I’m not sure how much we’re actually getting. Alex will be able to tell you more. I think she’s just about done for today.”

J’onn was right. After a few more minutes, Alex called in the guards to take the alien back to his cell and thanked their translator, sending her home with another agent as an escort. She joined them in the observation room looking tired, but satisfied.

“Anything we can use?” J’onn asked her.

“I think so. Hey, Kara!” She passed him her tablet and gave Kara a quick hug. “That’s the full transcript.” She added, switching back into business mode.” There’s a lot of repetition, and I’m not entirely sure of the translation, but it looks like we were right. The rogue aliens are looking for the talisman, but not for themselves.”

“Bounty hunters?”

“I think so.”

“Hmm...” J’onn scrolled through the transcript. “It makes sense. Not many beings in this or any other universe would risk taking a chance with the Fifth dimension’s tricks themselves, but stealing the talisman for profit... I’m only surprised we don’t have more of them on our doorstep.”

“Apparently Supergirl has been something of a deterrent,” Alex said with a proud grin for her sister. “This guy came here for the bounty, but once he realized there was a Kryptonian involved he started looking for passage back.”

“But we’re still holding him?” Kara asked, not entirely comfortable with the idea of incarcerating someone who just wanted to go home.
Alex held up her hands. “It’s for his own protection. Once he agreed to talk, he knew he was going to be a target, but he says he’d rather have a planet full of bounty hunters as his enemy than Supergirl with a Levande Begaren.”

“Levande Begaren?” J’onn asked, looking up from the tablet.

“It’s what he calls the talisman,” Alex said. “Though apparently it translates more closely to Bright Wish, and there’s a gesture he uses with it that’s supposed to mean small, I think.”

“How did they know where to find it?”

“He insists the client only gave them a planet and a city, but he couldn’t seem to explain how they’re tracking it, or why they’re looking in the same kind of places we are. He just kept repeating a phrase the translator couldn’t quite make sense of. Here...” Alex pointed it out on the tablet. “She said it sounded like a proverb; something about looking for one among many.”

J’onn rubbed his chin. “Could it mean they know the talisman is in pieces?”

“Maybe?” Alex shrugged. “I’ll keep working on it, and I’ll send a recording of what we have to M’gann. She’s been trying to find me a better translator, but most of her clientele aren’t interested in working with the DEO, so she might have better luck with it on her own.”

“Good idea.” J’onn handed the tablet back. “The more we know, the better we’ll be able to handle things once we have all eight pieces in our custody. Kara,” he added. “Alex tells me we’re adding another member to the family. How is that going so far?”

“Honestly? I’ve never been so happy. Or so exhausted! Is parenthood always like this?”

J’onn grinned. “Wait until you have two.”

“Oh, no.” Kara shook her head. “One is more than enough, thanks.”

“Lizzy doesn’t want a little brother or sister?” Alex asked.

“She wants a tiger,” Kara pointed out. “Siblings aren’t even on her radar.”

“You never know...”

“How about a cousin?” Kara suggested, grinning at Alex’s sudden look of panic. “Maggie likes kids, right?”

“I, Uh....”

J’onn tried to hide a chuckle behind his hand, and Alex whirled around to glare at him. “What are you laughing at, Grandpa? Wait until we’re asking you to babysit!”

“Grandpa?” J’onn’s tone was light, but there was something raw and vulnerable under the teasing.

“Of course,” Kara put in. “If we’re doing this, then so are you. Unless... “ she trailed off, suddenly worried she’d overstepped. “I mean, if you don’t want to-”

J’onn pulled her into a hug before she could finish. “I’d be honoured.” He held out a hand to Alex. “You too.”

Alex took it and let him tug her into the embrace. “This doesn’t mean I’m having kids.”
“Whatever you say Alex,” Kara said with a smile.

“Aw, group hug!” Winn said from the doorway. He reached out his arms, but apparently J’onn had already expressed his emotional quota for the day.

“Not you, Mr. Schott,” he said with a growl, giving Kara one last pat on the shoulder before releasing her and Alex.

“Hey, don’t stop being adorable on my account,” Winn said. “I love a good space-family moment, but seriously, you do have to stop, because we have another alien attack.”

“Where?”

“Natural History Museum, and this one actually has a piece of the talisman, so... we might want to hurry.”

No... no... This was bad. This was very bad.

“Isn’t that where you’re holding the Gala tomorrow night?” Alex asked, echoing Kara’s thoughts, both of them already on the move, J’onn splitting off to head for the control room and rally a team.

“Yes, and Jess is going to kill me.”

“Jess? Lena’s secretary?”

“Yeah, Lena made her help me finish planning the party, and she’s kind of bossy and a perfectionist, and I’m pretty sure she doesn’t like me, so I’m trying to be extra nice, but if anything gets ruined because I’m not there to stop it, I’m never going to win her over.”

“Wait, so Lena’s secretary knows you’re Supergirl too? Kara!”

“I’m sorry! It’s not my fault. She’s really smart.”

“Ugh, fine. I’ll send Winn over with an NDA tomorrow.” They reached the armoury and Alex suited up. “All right, let’s go save your party.”

Kara couldn’t fly quite as fast with a passenger, but the museum wasn’t far, and she was grateful for the backup. Maggie and the Science Division were already there, but they were stuck out front, unable to get in past the panicked crowds rushing out the doors and down the steps to safety. Kara dove, holding Alex close as she skimmed over their heads and through the front door. She set Alex down once they were past the worst of the crush.

“It’s in there!” shouted one of the security guards, pointing to the Dinosaur Hall. He was white-faced, but steady, doing his best to keep the crowd from becoming a stampede. Kara nodded to show she’d heard him, and swooped across the lobby towards the exhibit, Alex close behind her.

Thankfully, it wasn’t much of a fight.

They found the alien, a four-armed reptile with impressive teeth and a long whippy tail, at the back of the Hall, where he’d cornered a group of school children and their teachers. Kara could only assume he was looking for hostages, rather than a meal, since no one was hurt, but the frightened faces of the kids gave Kara’s natural protective instincts an added boost, and she hit the alien a little harder than she probably needed to, knocking him out with one punch.

The children gave a ragged cheer when he dropped and Alex slapped the cuffs on him (two sets.) He
shifted form as he lost consciousness, losing the tail and some of the teeth until he looked more like a big guy with a skin condition than an alien. The extra arms kind of gave it away, but he could have hidden those.

“Hey, I think I know him,” Maggie said, joining them once the crush had eased. “We picked him up as a suspect in a minor assault last week, but it didn’t stick. Is he one of your talisman guys?”

“Bounty Hunter,” Kara said, filling Maggie in while Alex called J’onn to let him know they had the alien in custody. “What do you know about him?”

“Not much,” Maggie said as Alex rejoined them. “He’s not registered, but that’s not a crime. He wouldn’t give us a name or an address, but witnesses put him and a gang of his friends at a condemned apartment building down on Wilson. We were waiting on a search warrant when the victim dropped the charges.”

“Are you thinking what I’m thinking?” Alex asked Kara, grinning.

Kara knew that grin. “No... no stakeouts Alex. I don’t have time for a stakeout!” Not to mention there was this promise of Lena, and words like easy waiting for her at home tonight...

“Oh come on, we nabbed this guy without damaging anything, Jess is helping with the party, and you’ve got Mom too. We haven’t had a sister’s stakeout in ages! And...” she added when Kara didn’t budge. “It’s for Lizzy. Don’t you want to save Lizzy?”

Maggie shook her head, but she was laughing at Alex’s wheedling. “That’s low, Danvers.”

Kara sighed, reluctantly bidding farewell to her night-in. “Fine! We’ll have a stakeout, but you’re bringing the snacks!”

She called Lena to tell her as she was flying back to CatCo. to write up a story on the Museum attack. Lena was annoyed until she mentioned Lizzy, and then she was surprised that Kara had even considered saying no.

“If Alex thinks this will help, then of course you should go,” she said. “Lizzy and I will be fine on our own tonight.”

“It’s just...” Kara fought down a blush, even at this altitude. “We had plans.”

“I was only teasing, Kara,” Lena assured her. “Not,” she added, her heartbeat quickening slightly over the phone. “That I wasn’t hoping... but I’m not pushing you. I promised.”

“I know,” Kara hastened to say. “You would never, but... I think, I mean, if you’re ready, then I guess,” she rushed to get it out, afraid she’d lose her nerve if she didn’t. “I’m ready too!”

“Kara,” Lena said after a long pause, voice tight and a little strangled. “Darling, I’ve been ready since long before we woke up in bed together, but did you have to tell me this right before a board meeting? How exactly am I supposed to concentrate on Lcorp’s advertising budget now?”

“Oh, Ho! Now who’s the evil genius?” Kara teased, flying a giddy little loop at the thought of Lena being the one hopelessly turned on at work this time.

“Still me,” Lena said, recovering swiftly. “Because while you’re stuck watching an empty building all night, I’ll be at home in bed, by myself...” Kara swore she could hear Lena biting her lip. “I wonder how I’ll pass the time...”
Did she just...? Stunned by the implication and the mental image, Kara nearly flew straight into a building. She swerved, only to narrowly miss a tree, and drop her phone. She caught it before it hit the ground, but by then she had well and truly lost the upper hand. Lena was still laughing when Kara got the phone back up to her ear. “Why would you say that?”

“Have a happy stakeout, darling,” Lena said sweetly. “I’ve got to run.”

Kara grumbled a goodbye and stuffed her phone back into her boot.

This time even Snapper noticed she was out of sorts and gave her a wide berth. Kara wrote up her story, only breaking one keyboard in the process, which embarrassed her enough that she managed to calm the heck down, and finish it without further incident.

Alex kept her side of the bargain, showing up with a veritable mountain of snacks that did a lot to soothe Kara’s feelings about the whole thing. So what if she had to take two trips to get Alex and the snacks up onto the roof? It was dark. No one saw them.

“This is fun,” Alex said once they were settled, she had set up all of her favourite gadgets, and they had made it through the first bag of Cheetos. “I mean, it’s work, but it’s also fun, right?”

“Yeah...” Kara had to admit, leaning back against the maintenance door. For the first time in ages, she was sitting still with nothing to do but fight over her favourite foods with her favourite person and talk about nothing. She had all of her super-senses attuned to the building below them and the surrounding streets, but so far there hadn’t been anything interesting going on. She missed Lena and Lizzy of course, but it was nice, in a weird sort of way, to miss them, knowing they would be there when she got home.

She was deliberately not thinking about what Lena might be doing while she was gone.

“It’s been a while since we got to hang out,” she added. “Even if we don’t learn anything, I’m glad we’re here.”

“Me too,” Alex said. “Though... I got the feeling you had other plans...” She trailed off suggestively.

Kara threw a Twinkie at her.

“Hey!” Alex laughed, catching it. “I’m not allowed to ask how that’s going?”

“No!”

“Oh, come on! Please?”

“Nope.” Kara was resolute.

“Why not?”

“Because you’re the reason it’s not going anywhere right now!” Kara tried for stern, but Alex’s terrible attempt at pouting was making her giggle.

“Oh, really?” Alex smirked.

Kara sighed, giving in to the inevitable. “How much do you know?”

Alex tore open a bag of licorice and grabbed a bottle of coke, ready for an all out gossip session. “I know my little sister likes girls, but Lena refused to give me any details. So spill! Have you kissed her yet?”
“Does the cheek count?”

“Not really.”

“Then no,” Kara admitted, grudgingly.

“Why not?”

“I don’t know! Stuff keeps happening... like surprise stakeouts,” she added pointedly.

Alex shrugged. “You could have said no.”

“You pulled the kid card!”

“I did, I’m sorry.” Alex actually did look a little sorry. “But, I’ve missed you... I’ve hardly seen you since all of this started.”

“Yeah, well you’ve been busy with Maggie too.”

“I know.” Alex ate a piece of licorice. “We’re going to be okay, right?” She asked after letting the silence rest for a minute. “I mean, even if Maggie and I have kids, and you and Lena have more kids, and our lives go insane, we’ll still make time for each other?”

“Of course we will!” Kara was appalled at even the idea that anything or anyone would or ever could take Alex’s place in her life. “Alex, you will always be my sister, and I will always have time for you, even if I have a dozen kids, which I won’t, because Rao, this one is enough!”

Alex laughed. “Same here. We’ll make Lena and Maggie watch our two dozen children while we eat junk food on top of buildings at least once a week.”

“Pinkie swear?” Kara asked, holding out her hand.

“Pinkie swear,” Alex agreed, solemnly hooking Kara’s little finger with her own. “Now hand over those Oreos!”

“Not a chance!” Kara held the bag out of reach. “Those are mine!”

“Do you really not want any more kids?” Alex asked a few minutes later after successfully negotiating an exchange of hostages; six Oreos for a bag of gummy worms.

“I don’t know...” Kara twisted and pulled a red and green gummy worm between her fingers. It was true that Lizzy had turned their lives upside down and she really was exhausted, like all the time, but moments like this reminded her just how lucky she was to have a sister. She wanted Lizzy to have that too, and if human/kryptonian hybrids were possible outside of fifth-dimensional meddling, didn’t she owe her people that chance to live on?

She could see it; a big house with a porch swing and a backyard, maybe a dog. Lena would want something modern, but Kara was pretty sure she could talk her into making an investment on a historic home with years of memories and character. She could imagine them raising a family there and the idea filled her with terror, but also... longing?

“I never really thought about it,” she admitted. “Not until Lizzy showed up. I guess it wouldn’t be so bad, to have a few more kryptonians running around.”

Alex grinned. “Just picture the headlines; Lena Luthor: Mother of Aliens. Lillian would have a fit!”
“Oh, Rao...” Kara put two and two together. “I just realized the head of Cadmus is also my *mother-in-law!* Do you think she hates me more or less than when I was just Superman’s cousin?”

“Definitely more. But on the upside, she’ll probably stop trying to win Lena over to the dark side.”

“There is that...”

As a stakeout it was a complete failure. None of the reptile’s friends showed up, and they didn’t gain any new information, but Kara still felt lighter after dropping Alex off at her apartment and flying home just before dawn.

*****

If the day before the Gala had been a whirlwind, the day of the Gala was a hurricane.

From the moment Eliza picked Lizzy up, time seemed to be moving faster than even Kara could keep up with it. She spent the morning at Catco, keeping up appearances with Snapper. Her story on the museum attack had mollified him, but he still wanted to see more on the bigger picture of Aliens and Humans living side-by-side. He had zero interest in her Anniversary Gala, or why it should take away time from her actual job. Kara was tempted to point out that it was a celebration of an actual human, living beside an actual alien, which made it pretty darn relevant, but she wasn’t ready for her identity to be on the cover of Catco magazine.

Cat had discretion. Snapper didn’t.

So she made frantic phone calls while her boss wasn’t looking, fielding questions and demands from the caterers, the band, the decorators and the museum staff who wanted assurances that no more aliens would be attacking their guests. Apparently using Supergirl as a source a few times had made Kara her keeper in the eyes of the public, and she found herself promising that the hero would be there, which was true, but she fervently hoped there would be no need for her alter ego tonight.

Jess called twice. Once to yell at her for interfering, and then a second time to grudgingly thank her for talking the museum out of demanding that they hire a second security company at the last minute.

The secretary was proving invaluable, playing bad cop to Kara’s good cop, however involuntarily at first, and once she got over her pique, they were even more efficient. She was Kara’s eyes and ears on sight until Snapper finally let her go at noon. Kara picked up lunch for Lena since Jess wasn’t in the office to make sure she ate, and dropped it off. Lena was on the phone when she got there, but she mouthed a quick *thank you*, and her smile made Kara want to stay, but there was still so much to do!

She spent the afternoon at the museum, shooing Jess away for a much needed break, which she was pretty sure the secretary used to check on Lena, but that was none of her business. By four, everything was finally done or would be done in time without her help and she went home to get dressed.

Lena had been in charge of clothes. She’d insisted and Kara hadn’t argued with her. She had learned a lot from Cat about fashion, but of the two of them, Lena was still the expert. Kara and Lizzy had been measured and fussed over earlier in the week at Lena’s favourite dress shop. They’d tried on half a dozen dresses each, Kara standing awkwardly for photos which she assumed had been sent to Lena, since she hadn’t been able to get away from work for the appointment. Lizzy had enjoyed the dress-up for about half an hour, and after that they had designated one of the staff to follow her around the store and keep her out of trouble.
He’d succeeded. Mostly, but Kara had heard later that he’d handed in his two-weeks’ notice as soon as they left.

So Kara had no idea what she’d actually be wearing. The dress had been hanging up in a garment bag in their closet for days, but there hadn’t been any time to even look at it, let alone try it on. There was a hair and make-up team coming over at five. Lizzy, they would tackle together, right before they left so she didn’t have time to rip or stain anything. Eliza was feeding her before she brought her over to get dressed, and then she would be taking her home at eight, so she only had to be presentable for about two hours.

Kara took her dress to the bathroom to try it on.

It was blue. The same blue as her suit, with off the shoulder sleeves, a modestly fitted bodice and full, floor length skirt. Silver crystals glittered around her waist, scattering up across the bodice and down through the skirt like little winking stars that shimmered when she moved. She looked like the night sky come to life; both alluring and innocent.

“It’s perfect,” Lena said, startling Kara, who had been too caught up in her reflection to notice she wasn’t alone.

Kara blushed, smoothing the skirt nervously. “You chose well.”

“You wear it well,” Lena said, stepping into the bathroom and turning Kara back to face the mirror. She stood close behind her, wrapping her arms around Kara’s waist and taking advantage of her heels and Kara’s bare feet to rest her chin on Kara’s shoulder. “The dress is lovely, but you my darling, are beautiful.”

Kara leaned back into her, soaking up Lena’s warmth and her words. “You really think so?”

“Always, but if I stay here admiring you, we’re never going to make it to our party.”

“And that’s bad?”

“That’s bad.” With a brief kiss to her bare shoulder that made Kara shiver, Lena released her. “Would you like to come help with my dress?” she asked mischievously from the doorway.

“If I do that we really won’t get to the party,” Kara said, shooing her away. “Go, get dressed. You have ten minutes.”

Lena sighed but she went.

The stylists, thank Rao, were right on time and Eliza and Lizzy were right behind them, so Kara didn’t have the luxury of saying what she really thought of Lena’s dress when she finally saw it, but she was pretty sure her dumbstruck expression said it all.

Lena had chosen something a little more daring for herself. It was green and sleeveless, with a nearly indecent neckline, and it hugged her curves right down to mid thigh before spinning out into a sheer, filmy skirt that dragged on the floor behind her with a slit up the front that was nearly as risqué as the neckline. Silver crystals that were a match for Kara’s added a bit of sparkle, and tied their outfits together. She’d paired it with a set of dangerously high heels that insured she’d be as tall as Kara in her much more reasonable footwear.

“You look lovely dear,” Eliza said for both of them. “Now I’m going to go and wrestle this little girl into her clothes while you two get your hair done.” She gave Lena a hug before carrying Lizzy off to her room.
“Do you like it?” Lena asked, almost shyly, her earlier bravado seemingly forgotten.

Kara could only nod, dumbly, but Lena smiled as if it was a rave review, submitting more or less meekly after that to the harried woman trying to get her sitting down so she could do something with her hair.

“Up or down?” she asked, already brandishing her combs and creams and gels.

“Down,” Kara said immediately, flushing when Lena and the stylist both turned to raise an eyebrow at her. “Umm... I like it down?” she explained, flustered. “But you can do whatever you want!”

Lena grinned, slow and dangerous, and Kara was pretty sure she actually melted, at least on the inside.

“Down it is then,” Lena told the stylist with a smirk.

The woman huffed. “Up is better with this dress...” she grumbled, but she didn’t argue, just got to work.

“You’re having yours up, right?” Lena asked. “It would be a shame to waste those shoulders...”

“I think so?” Kara squirmed a little under her heated gaze.

“Good.” Lena winked and Kara’s stylist muttered something about the temperature in the room, which made her blush even harder, and really the entire thing was completely mortifying, but Lena was still smiling at her, so it was maybe sort of worth it.

Maybe.

Somehow they made it through the last of the preparations and the limo ride to the Gala without Kara spontaneously combusting. Having Lizzy there helped. She was a little ball of turquoise tulle and impotent rage when the buckles on her shoes proved too much for stubby toddler fingers. Her dress was a perfect blend of Kara’s blue and Lena’s green, with a simple empire waist and a frothy sparkling skirt. She had loved it on the hanger, but she hated it once it was on. Just this once, Kara bribed her with a cookie to sit still to have her hair done, throwing a towel over her dress to keep it clean.

The treat mollified her until she figured out she couldn’t take off her shoes. It was all Lena and Kara could do to keep her presentable until they pulled up at the museum.

Once inside, Lizzy forgot all about her dress and her shoes, glowing under all the attention. Alex and Maggie stole her after a few minutes, carrying her off to the buffet, and leaving Kara and Lena alone for half a second before Annie found them.

“Ms. Luthor!” Annie squealed, dragging her girlfriend over. “Thank you so much! This is Emily. Emily, this is Ms. Luthor and Ms. Danvers! You guys look so amazing!”

“Hello,” Emily said, rather more sedately, though her smile was genuine. She offered each of them a firm handshake. “We’re so grateful for this evening. Annie’s been talking about nothing else all week. Nothing else,” she added with a fond eye roll. “You may be her favourite people in the world right now.”

“Hey!” Annie elbowed her, but Lena only smiled.

“You’re more than welcome. Kara and I are happy to have you both here, and I’d love to see your
resumes on my desk when you graduate.”

Annie beamed. “Can I hug you? I’m going to hug you.” She suited actions to words, hugging both Kara and Lena in turn.

Emily’s thanks were less effusive, but no less genuine, and she eventually managed to herd Annie away so that Lena and Kara could mingle with their other guests.

Kara shook more hands than she had in her entire life, and smiled until her cheeks ached. She was used to Cat’s parties, but Cat had never expected her to host anything. This was a new experience. Lena, of course, was in her element. She glowed a little more with every kind word and honest smile, her usual professional facade melting away in the face of such an unequivocal welcome.

“They like you,” Kara said in a brief lull between guests, nearly bursting with joy herself at seeing Lena so happy.

“I keep waiting for the punchline...” Lena admitted, but her eyes were sparkling. “Are you okay? Or do you need a break?”

“Actually...” Kara’s gaze strayed to the dance floor where couples were just beginning to gather. Did she dare? “Would you like to dance?” she held out a hand that was barely trembling at all.

Lena inhaled sharply, her cheeks paling, and then flushing faintly. “I’d love to,” she said smoothly in spite of her obvious surprise, laying her hand in Kara’s and allowing her to lead them through the crowd.

Kara wasn’t quite sure what she’d been thinking, except that she just had to have Lena to herself for at least a few minutes. She was aching with the need to touch her, even though she knew touching was only going to make it worse. Lena seemed just as eager, stepping into Kara’s arms without any hesitation. There was an awkward moment when they both tried to lead, but Lena acquiesced with a laugh.

“Only because you were the one who was brave enough to ask,” she breathed against Kara’s jaw, arms already looped around her neck. “But I lead the next one.”

“I’m not sure I’m going to make it through this one,” Kara admitted shakily. “Are you sure we have to stay for the whole party?”

“Don’t tease me,” Lena warned her, tangling her fingers in Kara’s hair.

“Don’t tease you?” Kara was incredulous. “You’re the one who-”

“Has been waiting quite desperately for you to kiss me,” Lena finished for her, shutting Kara up neatly. “I’m trying to be patient, but you’re making it very difficult.”

“I, um...” Kara stammered. “Here? In front of all of these people? What will they think?”

Lena sighed, leaning back to give Kara a look that was one hundred percent done with what anyone else thought. “That we’re a happily married couple celebrating their third anniversary?”

“Oh. Right...” She’d almost forgotten that part.

“So?”

“But... it’s our first kiss, shouldn’t it be special?”
“We’re on a dance floor, having our very first dance in a museum that was rented out just for us, wearing dresses that cost a small fortune and we’re surrounded by all of our friends and non-criminal family. How much more special can it get?”

She had a point, but still... “Are you sure? What if-”

“Kara,” Lena’s tone was a warning. “I’m going to kiss you now. Any objections?”

Kara shook her head, mutely.

“Good.”

She buried both of her hands in Kara’s hair, probably messing up all of the stylist’s hard work, but Kara couldn’t bring herself to care, and tugged her closer, tipping up just the tiniest bit on her toes because her heels, however devastating, weren’t quite enough. Kara steadied her with hands on her hips, closing her eyes as their lips met for the first time, and the world disappeared.

It was so soft.

That was Kara’s first impression. So much softer than kissing a boy. Not that it didn’t also burn like liquid fire licking down her throat and into her belly and spreading through her like a haze of euphoria and wonder, but it was a gentle blaze; warm instead of wild.

It was over before she was ready, and Kara found herself chasing a second kiss, hands sliding up Lena’s back to bring her closer.

Lena nearly whimpered into her mouth, only pulling away to catch her breath. “Keep that up, and people will talk,” she murmured, eyes glazed.

The song was fading, and the couples around them were shifting, some staying, others leaving, and new dancers taking their place. It was a chance to sneak away unseen, and Kara took it, tugging Lena along behind her out of the main hall and into the exhibits.

“Where are we going?” Lena asked, but she followed readily enough, still nimble on her heels, though Kara’s knees felt like water.

“Trust me,” Kara said, leading her around the velvet rope that was cordoning off the dinosaur hall. It was nearly dark amongst the silent fossils, only the faint glow of the emergency lights saving it from complete darkness. Once they were out of sight, Kara spun around and backed Lena into a display case, catching her lips in a third and fourth kiss before lifting her up onto the glass and stepping between her knees to kiss her in earnest.

“Kara Danvers,” Lena whispered roughly when Kara broke away to press trembling kisses to her throat, and take advantage of that oh so tantalizing slit up the front of her dress to slide needy hands up her thighs. “I’m surprised at you... Thrilled,” she added, gasping when Kara nipped the skin over her pulse point. “But surprised.”

“Rao, I’m kind of surprised at me too. I mean, I’ve kissed other people before and it was nice, good even. But you... forget flying, this is the best feeling in the world.

“It’s your fault,” Kara whined, resting her forehead against Lena’s shoulder and fighting to catch her breath. “Rao, I’m kind of surprised at me too. I mean, I’ve kissed other people before and it was nice, good even. But you... forget flying, this is the best feeling in the world.

“Fuck, Kara...” Lena pulled her into another kiss, this one rougher and messier.

Kara finally got her revenge, catching Lena’s lower lip between her own teeth, heat sparking through her at Lena’s sharp moan. She wasn’t sure exactly how far they would have gone if her over-
sensitive ears hadn’t caught the faint squeak of a shoe on a waxed floor behind them.

“Sorry, sorry!” Winn hurried to apologize, already backing away when Kara whirled around. “Lizzy found you!” he said, pulling the little girl after him, one hand firmly over her eyes.

“Mama, kiss Mommy!” Lizzy giggled, tugging at his hand. “Izzy kiss too!”

“No!” Winn told her. “Mommy and Mama need a little private time. We’ll go see Aunty Alex and tell her we couldn’t find them. I know she’s scary, but she can’t shoot lasers out of her eyes and your Mama can, so…”

“It’s okay Winn,” Lena called over Kara’s shoulder. “We’ll be right there.”

“Do we have to?” Kara asked, leaning back into Lena’s arms.

“There’s a buffet…”

Kara’s stomach growled, the traitor, and Lena laughed, giving her a little push.

“Come on darling, let me down so we can make ourselves presentable.”

“Fine…” Kara helped her down, gratified when Lena wobbled a little before finding her balance. They tidied each other’s hair, and Kara smoothed down Lena’s dress.

Lizzy bounded over to them once Winn let her go, and Lena scooped her up, carrying her past Winn without an ounce of shame.

Winn couldn’t quite hide his grin as Kara finished straightening her own dress. “Boning amongst the bones,” he said once Lena was out of earshot. “Nice!” He offered her a first bump, but Kara swatted him instead.

“Ow! Careful, I’m delicate!”

“We weren’t doing that!” Kara hissed.

“Yeah, only because you got caught first!” Winn crowed. “ Seriously though, how was it? Good? Because it looked good.”

“Winn!” Kara would have hit him again, but he danced back out of range. “I hate you.”

“You love me,” Winn gloated. “And you loooove Lena…”

“I’m going to love kicking your butt!” Kara tried to growl, but she was already laughing, unable to stay mad when she was nearly bubbling over with the after effects of whatever pure ecstasy kissing Lena had intoxicated her with.

Winn escaped without further injury and Kara let him go, following him more slowly back to the party. She would smile and make small talk, and raid the buffet, but inwardly she would be counting the hours and minutes until she could take Lena home.

Chapter End Notes
For anyone who's curious, Kara and Lena's dresses were inspired by, but not identical to these ones.


https://www.dhresource.com/0x0s/f2-albu-g4-M01-F2-23-rBVaEFf_QTiABaZUAAcsndW9dvw731.jpg/off-shoulder-navy-blue-ball-gown-evening.jpg
Lena was grateful for the few minutes it took to make her way from the darkened hall of the dinosaur exhibit and back into the bright lights of the party. It wasn’t much, but it was long enough for her blush to fade and her knees to stop feeling like they wanted to fold up underneath her. There was still an uncomfortable amount of swirling going on in her middle, and the heat that had left her cheeks had taken up a more permanent residence further south, but at least she could pretend she hadn’t just spent the last ten minutes being thoroughly kissed by her wife.

She hoped.

Lizzy helped.

It was difficult to dwell on secret kisses when there was an overdressed toddler in your arms, babbling enthusiastically about the many joys of the buffet, her limited vocabulary leaving Lena with only the barest impression of general culinary delight and something about crackers... There was a lot of pointing involved, and Lena followed her directions to the overloaded tables, where she found Alex and Maggie getting started on dessert.

“Just try it Alex!”

“No!”

“Come on... Hey, Lena!” Maggie saw her first. “Tell Alex to try the vegan pudding.”

Alex rolled her eyes. “Why would I eat vegan pudding, when there is perfectly good real pudding right beside it?”

“Because it’s better!” The obviously was implied.

“It’s really not...”
“Sorry, Maggie.” Lena offered her a sympathetic smile. “I have my hands full with the other Danvers’ eating habits. This one is all yours.”

“Hah!” Alex took a triumphant scoop of the *real* pudding, grinning at Maggie around her spoon.

“‘Izzy, pudding?’”

Lena had a brief moment of horror at the idea of chocolate pudding being anywhere near Lizzy’s very expensive, very *stainable* dress, but it was only a moment. She recognized her adoptive mother’s fingerprints all over that thought. It was only a dress. One Lizzy would very likely never wear again. Still, she did tuck a napkin around her neck before sitting her down at a table with her bowl. Some things were just good sense.

Maggie and Alex joined them.

“So did you find it?” Alex asked, sitting down with her plate of treats and pointedly ignoring Maggie’s aura of judgement.

“Find what?” Lena was honestly confused.

“The next piece of the talisman...? Isn’t that why you and Kara...*Oh!*” her eyes widened, and she smirked. “That’s *not* why you two snuck off... You owe me twenty, Sawyer!” she crowed. “I had the Gala!”

“Damnit!” Maggie cursed. “You guys couldn’t have waited to start necking until tomorrow?”

“Nope!” Kara cut in, she and Winn making their way over from the buffet with laden plates. “Sorry, Maggie.” She sat down beside Lena, her grin wide enough that Lena had trouble imagining she was feeling even an ounce of that apology.

“*Someone* looks pleased with themselves,” Alex teased.

Kara blushed, but she didn’t shy away from the innuendo the way Lena half expected her to. “Can you blame me?” she asked instead, turning that sunny smile on Lena, who nearly jumped out of her chair at the accompanying touch of soft fingertips along her thigh. “Who wouldn’t be?”

“Good point,” Alex admitted.

“Well done, kid!” Maggie offered a high-five across the table, which Kara, to Lena’s mortification, returned with a laugh.

“Cheers to that!” Winn held up a glass.

“I’m sitting *right* here,” Lena pointed out, half amused, and half scandalized.

“Oh don’t worry,” Maggie assured her. “We’d be much worse if you weren’t. Alex and I were terrified Kara was going to end up with that Daxamite Douche. Bagging a Luthor is cause for celebration.”

“Excuse me, I have not been *bagged*.”

“Yet,” Maggie said with a wink.

“Okay guys!” Kara made a *down girls* gesture, her other hand now resting on Lena’s knee under the table, thumb brushing along her skin in a way that was making it very difficult for Lena not to squirm. “Leave her alone. She’s not used to having sisters.”
“Hey!” Winn was all indignance.

“Oh, pipe down.” Maggie shoved him. “You know you’re one of the girls.”

“Darling,” Lena said, leaning closer to Kara. “Are you sure we can’t rethink this whole family business?”

“Sorry.” Kara said, her smile soft and warm and all for Lena. “If you want me, you’ve got to take them too.”

As if that was even a choice. “Drat, I guess I’m stuck then.” Lena sighed. “I don’t suppose I could negotiate for alternate holidays?”

“And miss any of the Danvers’ family traditions?” Now Kara was pouting. Lena had been right. She was never going to survive this woman. But that lower lip looked so inviting...

Maggie’s exaggerated gagging noises brought Lena back to herself before she could embarrass anyone. “No longing stares at the table!” She begged. “It’s so cute it’s sickening.”

“That’s the vegan pudding, sweetie,” Alex said with transparently fake sincerity. “I told you not to eat it.”

Maggie spluttered and Winn sniggered. Lizzy, serenely oblivious, scraped up the last of her own pudding, miraculously having gotten none of it on her face, and held up her bowl. “More p’ease?”

“Not tonight,” Lena said, taking the bowl away. “Or you’ll be the one who’s sick.”

Lizzy sighed, but accepted the ruling. “Up?” she tried instead, little hands in the air.

“I can take her,” Kara said, getting up. “I think it’s about time for her to head home with Eliza anyway.” She untucked Lizzy’s makeshift bib and swung the toddler up in the air, making Lizzy giggle.

“Fy, Mama!”

“Sorry kid.” Kara said, swinging her around one more time before settling her on one hip. “Mama’s wearing her glasses right now.”

“‘Izzy g’asses?” she asked, reaching out to touch Kara’s gently.

“When you’re older,” she promised, catching Lena’s eye with a smile that said see, I’m not lying this time! She lowered Lizzy for a goodnight kiss before stealing her own with a blush and a bashful grin while the rest of the table whooped and whistled.

Kara stuck her tongue out at them before heading off to find Eliza.

“Do you think she’ll actually need the glasses?” Maggie asked Alex once they’d gone, giving Lena a moment to recover from what should have been an innocent little kiss.

Alex shrugged. “Who knows? I think Clark’s powers started manifesting around puberty. Kara was thirteen when she came to earth, and she got hers pretty much right away. Lizzy’s genetically only half Kryptonian and not even from this dimension, so it’s anybody’s guess how powerful she might be, or if she’ll even have any powers at all. All we know right now is that her skin is tough enough to break needles, but I’m not going to do a full invulnerability test on a toddler.”

“Not that she wouldn’t be wildly enthusiastic about the idea,” Lena put in once she’d caught her
breath. “I don’t think she knows how to be afraid, but as her mother, I appreciate your restraint.”

“You think you’re going to be ready for that, Luthor?” Maggie sounded almost gleeful at the prospect. “Teenagers are bad enough without the strength, the flying and the heat vision...”

“Don’t forget super hearing,” Winn added. “You two might want to invest in some soundproofing if you know what I mean...” he waggled his eyebrows suggestively.

“Winn!” Alex elbowed him. “That’s my little sister you’re talking about!”

“What? Maggie started it!”

“Don’t blame me for your dirty mind!”

Lena rolled her eyes; though inwardly she was thinking he might have a point... she’d have to get some estimates... “I think we’ll be fine.”

“Can’t be as bad as these two,” Alex agreed. “Let’s go before they get any worse.”

“I’m right behind you.” They left Maggie and Winn bickering, and drifted back out into the crowd. Alex introduced Lena to some of her and Kara’s co-workers, and they stopped to chat with J’onn, who was dashing in a fancy suit instead of his usual black uniform. He gave Lena an unexpected hug, wishing her well in a gruff, fatherly way that nearly brought tears to her eyes.

Kara found them again while they were talking shop with a small group of Lcorp’s Research and Development engineers. Alex was clearly in her element, and she barely noticed when Kara tugged Lena away; waving goodbye distractedly as she explained in minute detail exactly how wrong they were about the future of biomedical technology.

“Maybe I should hire her,” Lena said thoughtfully, winding her arms around Kara’s neck as she led them back out onto the dance floor. “She’d keep them on their toes.”

Kara shook her head. “Alex would never leave the DEO. But she’d probably be happy to do a little ego-crushing for you every once in a while.”

“Hmmm...” Lena hummed, losing her train of thought as Kara pressed a hand to the small of her back and urged her closer. Honestly, this was getting embarrassing. “You’re very good at this,” she muttered into her shoulder.

“Dancing?”

“Distracting me.”

Kara chuckled. “You’re pretty distracting too...” she admitted.

“Oh?” Now this was more familiar territory. “Tell me how I distract you...” she breathed, stroking the back of Kara’s neck just to make her shiver.

“Oh, um...well, that dress is a pretty good start, and this hair...” Kara ran her fingers through the loose curls. “I might have realized I liked girls a lot sooner if you wore it like this more often,” she added reproachfully.

“I’ll keep that in mind...” Lena leaned back a little so she could see Kara’s face. “Anything else?”

“Um...” Kara ducked her head. “Nothing that I can say in public?”
“That’s promising,” Lena teased. “When do you think I could get the rest of this list...?”

“How soon can I take you home?”

“Now?”

“You have a party.”

“We have a party,” Lena corrected her. “But later...?”

“Later, I’ll tell you anything you want to hear,” Kara promised, her hand on Lena’s back drifting lower as she pulled her in close again.

Now it was Lena’s turn to shiver, and she didn’t miss the smug upturn of Kara’s answering grin under her blush.

After that, the party dragged on.

They finished their dance and reluctantly went back to mingling, Kara never far from Lena’s side. If she wasn’t holding her hand, she was touching her some other way; a hand on her back, her elbow or her wrist, an arm around her waist or a shoulder pressed against hers. A kiss on the cheek while she smiled for the photographer...

Lena was peripherally aware that there was cake, and speeches, she gave one herself; so carefully memorized and rehearsed that even in her preoccupied state she knew she’d nailed it. There was champagne, and so many congratulations that they all merged together. Someone gave her an estimate of the funds raised so far, and the number was incredible, more than she’d hoped, and tomorrow she would be very happy about that. But tonight... everything that wasn’t Kara seemed to just fade away.

She wasn’t sure exactly how they made it to the Limo after all of the goodbyes, only that they were finally alone, and Kara was reaching for her, and Lena was in her lap, and Kara’s mouth was under hers. She tasted like champagne; Champagne and chocolate pudding and something brighter, searing across her tongue and lighting her up like a bonfire.

She couldn’t get enough.

Kara’s hands were in her hair, making a ruin of all of the stylist’s careful pins and curls. Lena’s fingers itched to do the same to Kara’s, but she couldn’t seem to stop kissing her long enough to do anything else. They had been weeks getting here, months, it felt like. Lena had imagined this, dreamed about it, but she’d never thought she’d really have it.

“Fuck...” she rasped, dragging in a ragged breath before she swooned.

“Yeah...” Kara agreed weakly, dropping her head back against the seat. “That.”

“Are all Kryptonians this good at kissing, or is it just you?”

“Me?” Kara laughed helplessly. “If anyone has super powers in this department, it’s you. I’ve broken noses.”

Lena found that hard to believe. “Maybe it’s just us then?”

“Maybe...” Kara smiled shyly up at her, tucking wild curls back behind her ears. “You really...? I mean, um...it’s good?”
Lena closed her eyes and begged for strength. “Is it good?” The strangled sound in the back of her throat was closer to a whimper than she was entirely comfortable with. “If I remember half of anything else from tonight it will be a miracle. Is it good...” she scoffed.

“So that’s a yes?”

“That’s a ‘kiss me, Kara Danvers,’” Lena said, leaning back in. She sighed happily when Kara’s hands dropped to her waist, pulling her closer. This kiss was softer, a smoulder instead of a blaze. Lena finally got her fingers back into Kara’s hair, but the car slowed and came to a stop before she could really start pulling it apart.

The trip up to their apartment was torture, but when they finally closed the door behind them Lena spared a thought to remind herself to send Eliza a thank you gift for taking Lizzy for the night before Kara was pressing her back against it and reclaiming her mouth. The gentleness from the car was gone; Kara was kissing her like her life depended on it, and it was amazing and breathtaking and hotter than hell, and Lena was really going to hate herself for this but...

“Wait...” she said, pressing a hand to Kara’s chest and easing her back just far enough to take a full breath.

“Are you okay?” Kara was instantly solicitous, eyes nearly black but still full of concern. “Did I hurt you...?”

“No.” Lena could have laughed at the idea that Kara would ever hurt her. “You’re fine, it’s me.”

“Do you not want this...?” Kara would have pulled away, but Lena closed her fingers around a handful of her dress, holding her close.

“I do, fuck...” Lena took a deep shuddering breath. “You have no idea how much I want this.”

“Then what is it?” Her confusion was adorable, and not making this any easier.

“Can we just...” Lena felt like an ass, but her heart was still pounding and it wasn’t entirely in a good way. Why did she have to be so goddamned broken? “Can we take a step back here?”

“Of course!” Now Kara did pull away, gently untangling Lena’s fingers from her dress. “Whatever you need. I’m going to go, um... get changed, and I’ll be right back, and then we can talk or whatever you want... Um, did you want to call Alex?”

Now Lena did laugh, dropping her head back against the door. “No, I don’t want to call your sister. Go,” she said, waving Kara off. “Pyjamas and tea sounds perfect.” Not as perfect as what she’d thought they were going to be doing tonight... but apparently that was off the table, and it was her own damned fault.

Lena took her time in the bathroom. She nearly left her dress in a pile on the floor, feeling the need to punish something for the way her night was turning out, but her frustrating internal sense of fairness refused to allow her to blame a dress, so she hung it up over the shower rail and pulled on soft cotton
shorts and one of Kara’s T-shirts that she’d stolen from her dresser, needing that little bit of comfort for what was probably going to be a very awkward conversation.

She ran a brush through her hair and washed her face, feeling both more herself, and at the same time acutely vulnerable once she’d finished.

Kara had the tea ready and waiting when she came back into the living room. Lena liked her coffee black, but her tea liberally mixed with cream and sugar, and Kara had made it perfectly. The first sip went a long way towards settling her stomach, and she gave her a grateful smile over the rim of her cup. “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome,” Kara said, sitting down on the couch with her own mug. “Did you want to...?” She tipped her head towards the other end of the couch.

Lena ignored the suggestion, taking a seat in the middle, close enough that when she pulled her legs up underneath her, her knees were pressed against Kara’s thigh. “I said a step,” she explained at Kara’s questioning look. “Not a mile.”

“I wasn’t sure, I didn’t want to presume...”

“Hey,” Lena took Kara’s free hand in her own, tangling their fingers together. “You didn’t do anything wrong, I just...” It was hard to get the words out. Lena didn’t do this. She didn’t mix sex and feelings. Not for a long time, and never this intensely. She wanted Kara, so much it nearly hurt, but she was afraid. She knew, she knew Kara was different, and yet... logic didn’t seem to be her friend tonight.

“Whatever it is,” Kara said. “I’m here... we could just get some sleep if you want...”

“No.” Lena shook her head. Whatever else she was, she wasn’t a coward. “I want to talk about this, I’m just, angry with myself, I guess. I haven’t been with many people, but enough that I shouldn’t...” she gritted her teeth. “Teasing you was fun, kissing you was incredible. The rest should have been easy. I wanted it to be easy...”

“But it wasn’t,” Kara said for her. “Why?”

“Because I love you,” Lena admitted softly, closing her eyes against the sudden catch in her throat and tightness in her chest. “I’m in love with you, and it’s amazing and wonderful, but apparently it means we can’t have sex tonight, because I’m a useless mess who’s afraid to be happy.”

There was dead silence.

Lena opened her eyes to find Kara staring at her, eyes wide and mouth open.

“Oh,” she said. Then she blinked and a grin slowly spread across her face, like sunshine after a storm. “You’re in love with me?”

“That is the problem, yes.”

Kara shook her head in disbelief. “That’s not a problem, Lena.”

“It is right now.”

“No, it’s not.” Kara put her cup down on the coffee table, taking Lena’s away and putting it down too so she could hold both of her hands. “Listen, we don’t have to have sex tonight, or tomorrow or any time until we’re both ready for it. However long that takes. I know I tend to just... leap in
sometimes,” she admitted, a little shamefaced. “Change is... scary, so I kind of close my eyes and jump. It’s easier that way. I don’t have to think about it, I can just... do it. If that makes sense?”

“You wanted to just do me?” Lena asked, arching a brow.

“Ugh! You...” Kara snatched her hands back and crossed her arms with a pout. “I take it back! I don’t love you.”

“I’m sorry,” Lena laughed. “I didn’t mean to... wait-” It took a minute for Kara’s words to register. “You love me, too?”

“That’s what I said,” Kara grumped.

“No, you didn’t.”

“Oh...Well I meant to.”

“You have to actually say it though.”

“Why?”

“Because that’s how it works, you can’t just take back something you haven’t said yet.”

“So I can say it, and then take it back?”

“Or you could just say it.”

“Fine!” Uncrossing her arms with a huff, Kara took Lena’s hands again, turning them over so she could stroke her thumbs across her palms. The innocent touch tickled, and Lena bit her lip, trying to hold back a smile while she waited.

I’m in love with you, Lena Luthor. However much of a mess you might be,” she added with a lopsided smile. “Will that do?”

“That will do just fine,” Lena said, turning her hands to take hold of Kara’s and place them firmly around her waist before leaning in for a slow, sweet kiss. This one tasted more like mint toothpaste and sugar than champagne, but it was just as dizzying.

“So... we go slow?” Kara asked when Lena sat back, both of them grinning like idiots.

“Slow,” Lena agreed. “Think you can do that, Supergirl?”

“With you by my side?” Kara squared her shoulders and lifted her chin, every inch the dashing hero. “I can do anything.”
Chapter Summary

Kara and Lena try new things, Lizzy may be more than what she seems, Winn doesn't need to know, and Alex and J'onn have some thinking to do.

Chapter Notes

I think it's obvious by now that the whole finish by November thing is out... so we're aiming for the New year? Maybe?

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

After all this time, Kara had finally gotten used to waking up in bed with Lena.

Or so she thought.

That first morning... that first morning had been shocking. The second morning had been worrying and by the third she’d been annoyed, but once they’d stopped fighting it... waking up together had become part of their routine; a slightly awkward part, given Kara’s slowly escalating bi-panic, but still, almost normal.

Until it wasn’t.

The morning after the Gala wasn’t normal.

The morning after the Gala was different.

Kara was still the little spoon. That much hadn’t changed. She woke up sprawled on her belly, blankets wrapped in a tangled mess around her waist and legs, and all four of the pillows in her possession. She might have felt bad about that last part, if Lena hadn’t been using her as a pillow. With both arms curled snugly around Kara’s waist and one leg thrown over her hips, Lena was currently snoring softly into her shoulder blades.

Before last night, Kara might have tried to wriggle free without waking her. She definitely would have been conflicted about all the bubbly warm feelings she was having, and she probably would have been freaking out at least a little.

But this was the morning after, and this morning, Lena loved her.

Lena loved her. Lena was in love with her. Lena Luthor was in love with Kara Danvers.

Kara tried to contain a little squeak of glee, hastily clapping her hands over her mouth, but she wasn’t quite fast enough, or maybe Lena preferred her pillow to hold still. Either way she was waking up; sudden tension coiling in the lazy drape of her body across Kara’s.
Kara held her breath; silently willing Lena to remember that this morning was different. This morning, Kara Danvers was in love with Lena Luthor too.

Lena sighed, sinking even more heavily on top of Kara as she relaxed, nuzzling into the back of her neck with a contented hum. “...morning.”

“Good morning,” Kara said, unable to resist a happy wriggle.

“No moving,” Lena grumbled, immediately undermining her own instructions by pressing soft, sleepy kisses to the top of Kara’s spine and making her squirm. She unwound her arms from around Kara’s waist, sliding warm hands up her back to her shoulders and pushing her gently, but firmly, down into the mattress. “Stay,” she breathed, her breath wet against Kara’s skin.

Kara gulped and nodded, doing her best to stay still while Lena lavished attention on her neck and shoulders, brushing aside the straps of her tank top when they got in her way. She squeaked again when Lena sat up, one knee to either side of Kara’s hips, eager fingers tangling in her hemline and shoving the fabric up over her ribs.

Lena paused at the sound, breath catching in her throat. “Is this okay?” she asked huskily.

“This is slow?” Kara demanded in lieu of an answer, pushing herself up on her elbows and looking back over her shoulder.

Lena’s laugh was low and a little wicked. “Slow enough,” she said, her thumbs circling against Kara’s sides. “Do you want me to stop? Or may I slowly take off your shirt?”

“Oh, Rao...” Kara hung her head, blushing fiercely.

Lena pressed another kiss to her shoulder and started tugging her shirt back into place, but Kara reached back and caught her hand.

“No,” she said. “I mean... yes.” She took a deep breath. “Go ahead. Please...”

Lena’s answering “all right...” was a little shaky, but her hands were steady as she helped Kara out of her shirt, pulling it off over her head and then pressing her back into the mattress.

Kara kept a tight grip on her pillow, unable to hold back a whimper when Lena’s mouth returned to her neck, her shoulders and the dip of her spine, kissing and nibbling her way down to the hem of her pyjama pants before climbing back up again. Her hands followed the same path, stroking across the wide planes of Kara’s back, and then sliding down over her ribs and along her sides.

Kara arched up with a gasp as Lena nipped a particularly sensitive spot above her hip, and Lena pulled away, but only for a moment, urging Kara up and onto her knees with a hand on her belly until they were nestled together again, both of them sitting up and Lena’s forehead resting on her shoulder.

They were both panting now, and Kara could hear and feel Lena’s heart beating a rapid counterpoint to her own. Her hands had retreated back to Kara’s sides as if waiting for permission to go further. Kara leaned back, tipping her head to press a brief kiss to Lena’s cheek before taking Lena’s hands in her own and guiding them upwards.

“It’s okay, I’ll tell you if I need you to stop,” she murmured, letting go and dropping her hands to Lena’s knees on either side of her hips.

Lena laughed breathlessly. “So much for slow...”
“You started it,” Kara pointed out, inhaling sharply when Lena’s fingers grazed the underside of her breasts. Her grip on Lena’s knees tightened to just short of bruising.

“I couldn’t resist,” Lena admitted, pressing a kiss to the corner of Kara’s jaw. “You’re so cute in the morning; wrapped around your little horde of blankets and pillows, with your hair in your face, and your nose all scrunched up...I should take a picture next time. National City’s Hero: Dangerously Adorable.”

“Don’t you dare!” Kara squirmed, half embarrassed (wasn’t being the little spoon bad enough?) and half still hopelessly turned on since Lena’s teasing hadn’t been confined to her threat to out Supergirl as Supercute. Her busy fingers were swiftly reducing Kara to a puddle of Kryptonian goo. As slow stroke here, and a tweak right there, just as she sank her teeth into Kara’s shoulder in a playful love bite, and Kara was keening, all protests forgotten.

Still, why should Lena be having all the fun?

In a blur she turned the tables, spinning around and toppling Lena back into the nest of blankets at the foot of the bed. She buried her hands in her hair as she followed her down, catching her lips in a kiss more earnest than elegant. Lena didn’t seem to mind, opening her mouth under Kara’s with appreciative little sounds, and quickly turning the kiss into something a little more refined and a lot dirtier than Kara had planned.

Rao... even with superspeed, Kara was never going to keep up with this woman.

She broke away to catch her breath. “You snore,” she said, when she could speak again.

“Excuse me?” Lena sounded nearly as wrecked as Kara felt, but still a little indignant.

“You snore,” Kara said again, determined to get her share of the teasing in while she could still think straight. “And you always smell like flowers and spices. You wear the most gorgeous clothes, but I like you better in jeans. You’re a brilliant CEO, and an even better mom, and did I mention I’m in love with you...?”

Lena dragged her back down into another kiss, wrapping her arms around her neck and hooking a leg over her hips to pull her impossibly closer. Kara went willingly, all those warm bubbly feelings she’d woken up with welling up and spilling over in a wave of love and longing. How had it taken her so long to figure this out?

“...Love you,” Lena was murmuring between kisses. “I love you, I love you, I love you...”

Kara giggled, but not because it was funny. She laughed out of pure joy, bracing herself up on her forearms and grinning down at Lena with her hands still buried in her hair. “I love you too,” she whispered, pressing a silly little kiss to the tip of her nose.

“You’re ridiculous,” Lena admonished her, but her eyes were shining.

“You love me,” Kara reminded her, leaning down for just one more kiss....

Which was when the alarm decided it was time to go off. Because their alarm was clearly both sentient and evil.

Kara dropped her head to Lena’s chest with a groan. “It’s Saturday!” she whined.

Lena poked her playfully in the side. “We still have to go back to the Museum. There’s a piece of the talisman hidden in there somewhere, and we got a little... distracted, last night,” she added ruefully.
“Don’t want to,” Kara grumbled.

Lena tried to push herself up and couldn’t, Kara a dead weight on top of her. “Kara, come on...” she coaxed. “I’ll take you out for breakfast...”

“Can’t.”

“Why not?”

“I’m not wearing a shirt!”

Lena snorted. “You know I had my hands all over those five minutes ago... now I can’t even look at them?”

“No?” Kara squeaked, her burning face buried in Lena’s chest.

“What if I close my eyes?”

“You promise?”

“I promise.”

Kara looked up, suspicious, but Lena had dutifully closed her eyes. She sat up hastily and dug around in the blankets for her tank top, pulling it over her head with a sigh of relief. “Okay,” she said, turning off the alarm and swinging her legs over the side of the bed.

Lena opened her eyes and pushed herself up on her elbows, giving Kara a once-over with a slight pout and a sigh of regret. “We’ll have to work on the casual nudity.”

Kara blushed, fumbling for her glasses and sliding them up over her nose. “Maybe next time, we’ll get your shirt off...”

Lena smirked, slow and easy, lower lip just catching between her teeth.

“Ugh! Don’t do that!” Kara covered her eyes and jumped off the bed, stumbling blindly into the bathroom. “We have to go, remember?!”

“So that’s a no on showering together, then?” Lena called after her.

Kara poked her head back around the bathroom door and stuck her tongue out, making Lena laugh. She was smiling in spite of her embarrassment as she turned the shower on, twisting the dial all the way to cold. Her powers might prevent her from feeling it, but the thought helped.

*****

They got to the museum more or less on time. There had been a few more stolen kisses and one heady moment up against the kitchen counter when Kara had slid her hands under Lena’s shirt while the coffee was brewing, but they had mostly behaved themselves. All of the urgency and anxiety of the night before was gone, banished by their mutual declarations and that magic word, slow. Without the pressure to prove anything, or go, well... all the way... They could just relax and have fun.

Lots and lots of fun.

Jess did not seem impressed by the less side of more or less. She already had the catering and decorating clean-up crews organized and out the door, and now she seemed to be in the middle of an argument over her phone, her expression a harbinger of dressing-downs to come. “No, we
specifically said twelve pm. I realize you have visitors and staff waiting, but Lcorp and Catco paid very well to book the entire Museum for this event, and we will require the full time allotted on our contract. Of course if you’d prefer not to be considered for future bookings...”

*Can I help?* Kara mouthed, but Jess shook her head, rolling her eyes in a rare show of solidarity for the idiocy assistants dealt with on a regular basis.

“Hey, guys!” Winn waved them over to the front desk where he was setting up his laptop, wiring it into the central computer system. “Give me like, five minutes and you shouldn’t be setting off any alarms while you’re poking around this morning. The security here is ridiculous. Did you know the alarms will go off if anything even touches the ceiling?”

“Why would they need to touch the ceiling?” Jess asked, tucking her phone away, the museum official apparently vanquished.

“I don’t know,” Winn said. “I’m just the tech guy. Of course if we’d done this last night when the security-outage was scheduled...”

“Everything all right, Jess?” Lena asked while Kara swatted Winn and stole his coffee

“Hey! I need that!”

“Fine,” Jess said. “They wanted to bring their staff in ahead of the noon opening, but the thought of being blacklisted by two major corporations made them reconsider. You have three hours to do whatever it is you need to do.”

“Good, thank you. Has Dr. Danvers arrived yet with our daughter?”

“Yes, they’re looking around in the children’s wing. Miss Lizzy was getting restless. Agent Danvers and Detective Sawyer are on call if anything goes wrong.”

“Perfect. You’re free to go. Kara and I can take it from here. I’ll see you on Monday.”

Jess accepted the dismissal gratefully. Kara assumed she had much better things to do on a Saturday morning than assist her boss, her boss’s superhero wife and their daughter in the highly illegal theft of an unknown artifact from somewhere in the museum. Even if they did have a cop and a secret agent on their side.

“Done!” Winn announced, having ceded his coffee and finished hacking the museum’s security system instead. “All alarms have been re-routed to Maggie’s cell phone, so if we have an actual problem, like more bounty hunters breaking in, they’ll be able to send back up.”

“Thanks, Winn!” Kara gave the coffee back as a reward. “You’ll stay here and let us know if anything goes wrong?”

Winn saluted. “I’ve got you covered.” He handed Kara a communicator which she hooked over her ear. “Now that’s only set to receive right now, I don’t need to hear you two crazy kids being all adorable. Just press the button *here* to send.”

“Winn! We’ll have Lizzy with us...” Kara hissed, flushing.

“I didn’t say you’d be making out in shadowy corners,” Winn protested. “I can do without the darlings, and giggling and heartfelt sighs too. Trust me, we’ll both be happier this way.”

“Well then, darling...” Lena put the emphasis in just for Winn, extending a hand to Kara. “Shall we
Kara took her hand and wove their fingers together, thrilled as always by the way the pet name rolled off Lena’s tongue. “I don’t have anything to call you yet...” she pouted.

“Mmm...” Lena hummed, tugging her closer. “The way you say my name is already lovely.”

“Really?” Kara was intrigued. “So I just have to say Lena...” she lingered over the name, grinning suggestively.

“Oh, come on!” Winn cut in, waving his hands in a shooing gesture at them. “You’re not even out of the room yet! This is exactly what I was talking about. Go!”

Kara laughed, and took pity on him, leading Lena out of the lobby and down the hall to the children’s exhibits where they found Eliza and Lizzy exploring the Dress-Up centre. Lizzy was wearing donkey ears and an ornate crown that was way too big for her, with a little wooden spear in one hand and a shield in the other. She was posing in front of the mirror; jabbing experimentally with the spear and shoving her crown back up with a frustrated huff every time it fell into her eyes.

“Our daughter, the warrior queen,” Lena said fondly, accepting a hug from Eliza.

“She has goals,” Eliza agreed. “How are you girls? Was the night a success?”

For a moment Kara actually thought Eliza was talking about their um... extra-curricular activities, and she gaped, blushing furiously, but Lena covered for her with a wink. “The Gala was lovely. We reached our target and then some. Thank you for taking Lizzy, Kara and I both appreciated the time off.”

“Any time,” Eliza assured them, a knowing gleam in her eyes that suggested she knew exactly how much they had appreciated it. “Can I do anything else, or...?”

Kara shook her head, recovering from the brief moment of panic. “I think we’re good, Eliza. Thanks.”

“You’re welcome, my dear.” Eliza pulled Kara in for her share of the hugs. “I’m so happy for you,” she whispered while she had her close. “Take good care of each other.”

“We will,” Kara promised softly.

After Eliza had left, they wandered through the rest of the Children’s section. Lizzy relinquished the crown and the ears readily enough, but she hugged the spear close with such a pitiable expression that Kara didn’t have the heart to take it from her. They didn’t find anything there, so they headed up to the third floor, electing to cover the museum from the top down. Kara hoped Lizzy would lead them to whatever it was, because otherwise this was going to take a lot longer than three hours.

There was nothing on the third floor, or the second, though Lizzy was fascinated by the Age of Mammals exhibit, particularly the taxidermy. Kara nearly had to pry her off the stuffed tiger, trying haltingly to explain why it wasn’t moving.

Lena of course, was more direct. “It’s not alive anymore, sweetheart,” she told Lizzy, crouching down beside her and reading the tiger’s history off the plaque on the base. “This tiger used to live at the zoo, but when he was very old, he died, which is a little like going to sleep, only forever.”

“Tiger, wake up?” Lizzy’s lower lip wobbled, her spear clattering forgotten to the floor as she wrapped both arms around one of the tiger’s front legs.
“I’m sorry.” Lena stroked her hair. “He’s not going to wake up. He’s gone.”

Lizzy wiped her eyes, chin firming up stubbornly. “Izzy, hulp!” She declared, raising a hand that flickered with blue light and reaching for the tiger’s shoulder.

“Whoa!” Kara caught her wrist, holding her hand away from the bright orange and black fur. “Hold on there, kiddo. No raising the dead!”

“Can she do that?” Lena’s eyes were wide.

“I don’t know…” Kara struggled to hold on to Lizzy and keep her from making contact with the tiger, finally just picking her up and carrying her back about five steps. “But I’m pretty sure we shouldn’t be letting her try.”

“Mama, ‘Izzy down!’” she demanded, trying to wriggle free. “’Izzy, hulp!”

“Shh… It’s okay.” Lena caught her hands, pressing them between her own.

“Tiger, gone!” Lizzy sniffed, twin tears tracking down her cheeks.

“I know.” Lena’s voice was soothing. “But that’s okay. Dying isn’t bad. Old tigers die, and new baby tigers are born. This tiger is here so that people can learn from him, and remember him.”

Lizzy stopped struggling. “’Member?”

“That’s right,” Kara added. “We’ll remember him too. Do you want to take a picture?”

Lizzy considered this. “Pi’ture w’is ‘Izzy!” she decided.

Kara breathed a sigh of relief that the crisis had passed. “Okay, just let me get my phone.” She handed Lizzy to Lena, not quite ready to leave her unsupervised with the tiger just yet.

Lizzy seemed to have forgotten her tears, grinning happily for the camera from Lena’s arms. Lena stood beside the tiger, close enough for the picture, but far enough away that Lizzy couldn’t touch it. “Maybe we should skip the dinosaurs for now,” she suggested wryly. “That would make the news.”

Kara could only imagine.

Lizzy had to see and approve the photos before they could move on, but there were no further dramatics. She waved to the tiger as they left, with a cheerful “bye!”

“She’s resilient,” Kara said, taking Lena’s hand again once she’d put Lizzy down to run ahead towards the ocean exhibit. Lena still looked a little shaken.

“I know, it’s just… that’s hard. I want to be honest with her, but I don’t know how to do that without…”

“Making her cry?”

Lena nodded. “Lillian never sugar coated anything. Lex tried sometimes, but Luthors aren’t exactly known for the soft approach. I want to do better with her.”

“You already are,” Kara assured her. “Yes, she cried… and then she tried to create a zombie tiger… which Winn would totally love by the way, right up until it tried to eat him, but we made her feel better without lying to her, and now she’s fine. We did good.”
“We did?”

“Yep!” Kara pressed a quick kiss to her cheek and then raised their joined hands above their heads.

“Super moms!”

Lena rolled her eyes, but Kara could tell she was pleased, and she stayed close all the way to the ocean exhibit, their shoulders and hips brushing as they walked. Until they got there and she just...stopped. Kara took a few steps without her before she realized, turning around and tugging on their hands.

“What’s wrong?”

“I...” Lena looked a little green; her usually fair complexion even paler than normal. “Maybe we should do the dinosaurs first after all...”

“Why?” Kara looked around. She didn’t see anything for Lena to be worried about. The arched hallway was painted to look like the ocean, with low blue lighting and models of fish and whales and sharks hanging from the ceiling. The exhibit seemed mostly shark-themed, with dioramas, animatronics and information stations all along the walkway. Lizzy was ahead of them, thrilled with a model of a great white that rose up out of the floor, jaws wide, when she stepped in front of it, only to sink back down out of sight until she tripped the sensors again. She giggled and stroked his nose above the snapping teeth.

“Good ‘ish!”

Lena’s fingers tightening around Kara’s. “I don’t exactly...like sharks,” she admitted stiffly.

“Oh.” Kara could see the problem. “Lena...” she coaxed. “Are you afraid of sharks?”

“I didn’t say that.”

“No, you’re pale and shaking because you don’t like them.”

“I’m not shaking.”

“Right...Hmm.” Normally Kara wouldn’t ask Lena to do something she wasn’t comfortable with, but if the piece of the talisman was in there somewhere... “What if you close your eyes and I lead you through?”

Lena took a deep breath. “No. I can do this. Just... stay beside me?”

“The whole way,” Kara promised. “So is this a problem at the beach?” she asked, trying to keep Lena’s attention on her, and not their surroundings as she took one step into the murky blue hallway, and then another.

“I don’t go to the beach,” she admitted. “Or outdoor pools.”

“You don’t like pools?”

“No.”

“Because of sharks?”

“Is that a problem?”

“No... no.” Kara kept half an eye on Lizzy, wandering through the belly of a whale, eyes wide.
“It’s just... sharks don’t usually live in pools.”

“I know that,” Lena said through gritted teeth. “I’ve gotten better about it really. I used to be afraid of the bathtub when I was little... It was enormous, and I was sure sharks could swim up through the drain.”

“I was afraid of the popcorn maker when I first came to earth,” Kara confided, taking it as a personal victory when Lena relaxed enough to raise an eyebrow at her.

“The popcorn maker?”

“Yep. The sound was terrifying. I hid under the table, and poor Alex had to get under there too and sit with me until I calmed down.”

“Lex gave me a harpoon.”

Kara chuckled at the thought of a tiny Lena clutching her harpoon because she was afraid of sharks in the bathtub. “Do you still have it?”

“Of course. Or at least I did. I’m not sure if it made the trip over to the new apartment.”

“We’ll have to check. And hey, look! We made it out the other side.” She grinned. “All the way to the gift shop. Lizzy, please don’t touch that!” Kara caught a display case full of crystal animals just as it started to fall, setting it back up on its base with a sigh of relief. “Oh no you don’t... Come here,” she said, picking Lizzy up before she could get into anything else.

“What if it’s not here?”

“Then I guess we try the dinosaurs, and hope we don’t end up starring in National City’s own version of Jurassic Park...” Kara really hoped it didn’t come to that. Fighting dinosaurs was very low on her to do list.

They were in luck. Kara put Lizzy down to explore, far away from the breakable things, and she headed straight for the bookshelves, her hands glowing as she pulled down a book with a glossy cover that was almost too big for her to carry. She dragged it over to Lena, trailing blue sparks. “Mommy, d’is!”

“The Truth about Sharks,” Lena read off the cover as she took the book from Lizzy and handed it to Kara with a delicate shudder. “Monstrous or Misunderstood? Of course. Apparently this imp of yours has a sense of irony.”

“He’s not my imp,” Kara protested. She checked the time. “We still have about twenty minutes... Lizzy, you may choose one thing to buy, and then we’re going to go see Aunt Alex and Grandpa J’onn at work.”

Lizzy chose a shark puppet, which she promptly began using to grab and bite everything in reach, including J’onn when they stopped at the DEO’s downtown office to drop off the book.

“Stop that,” he growled, glaring down at the shark as it gnawed gently on his elbow. Lizzy giggled from behind his legs, clearly believing herself well hidden. He sighed. “You’re sure she intended to bring the tiger back to life?” he asked, apparently accepting his fate as a shark puppet’s chew toy.

“I think she was going to try,” Kara said, rescuing him by confiscating the shark and handing an unrepentant Lizzy to Lena. They had filled everyone in on the trip to the museum. Winn, predictably, thought Zombie Tigers were a great idea. Alex and J’onn were less enthusiastic.
“We’ve been assuming Lizzy is a by product of the original spell, or wish, or whatever it was, and that’s why she resonates with the talisman,” Alex said thoughtfully. “Maybe there’s more to her than that... M’gann thinks she might have a lead on a better translator for me, but he’s hard to find. There’s only two pieces left, hopefully she can get us a meeting with him by the time we have the whole thing.”

“I could run some more tests,” Winn suggested. “But creating life...? That’s a reach even for the fifth dimension. I’m pretty sure it’s impossible.”

“What about Lizzy, then?” Lena asked. “She’s alive, so something or someone, assumedly this imp of yours, created her.”

“That is a very good point,” J’onn admitted. “Winn, talk to Mon El. His people seem to have more history with the fifth dimension than we do. See if he has any input.”

“Should we be worried?” Kara asked.

J’onn and Alex exchanged a glance.

“Let’s just take this one step at a time,” Alex said. “Take her home, and we’ll let you know when we have any more information.”

Kara nodded, but it was hard not to worry.

They spent the afternoon in the park. Lizzy’s enthusiasm for the outdoors was infectious, and she’d soon roped them both into an elaborate game of something like tag, with a lot of spinning around in circles and falling down. It was impossible to not to laugh when Lena tipped dizzily into her arms, trying not to fall, and nearly taking Kara with her. They did fall, a couple of times, and Kara was careful to make sure Lena always landed on top, though she complained that Kara wasn’t exactly soft, what with the whole made of steel thing. Either way, it was a good opportunity to steal a kiss or three, which always made Lizzy giggle and demand a kiss too.

By the time they got home, Lizzy and Lena were worn out, and they collapsed on the living room floor with twin theatrical groans, leaving Kara to make dinner while they watched cartoons. She did her best, frozen pizza for her and Lizzy, and a salad for Lena (though she did steal one piece of pizza.)

Kara carried Lizzy off after dinner for bath time, thinking of Lena and her harpoon with a smile while she rubbed shampoo into Lizzy’s curls.

Lena joined them for a story on the couch, curling her legs up underneath her and snuggling into Kara’s shoulder. Kara put one arm around her, and the other around Lizzy, who held the book and turned the pages, because she was a tiny dictator in training. She didn’t actually know when to turn the pages, which made for an interesting reading experience since she took direction about as well as expected.

“Hmm... other than the brief zombie scare, and the swimming deathtraps, that was a very good day,” Lena hummed, joining Kara in bed once Lizzy was down, with her dog, her tiger, and her shark and they’d both brushed their teeth and changed into pyjamas. Kara was still doing her changing in the bathroom, but Lena didn’t seem to care, smirking at Kara’s blushes. She’d discarded her more conservative bed wear in favour of a brief silk camisole and lacy shorts. Kara suspected there were even less practical choices to come, and she was torn between anticipation and panic.

“Yeah, it was,” Kara agreed, her stomach turning a very pleasant roll when Lena threw one of those
long, long and nearly bare legs over her, settling into her lap. “Most of it.”

“You’re not having second thoughts are you?” Lena asked, a ghost of the worry that had been in the back of Kara’s mind since the DEO clouding her eyes. “About Lizzy?”

“No,” Kara said firmly. “Whatever else she is, she’s ours.”

“Good. Now...” Lena took Kara’s hands and brought them to her hips, a suggestive little smile tugging at the corner of her lips. She’d left her hair down, and that, along with the smile and the legs, was making it very difficult for Kara to think. “Would you like to make today even better?”

Kara slid her hands up as Lena ducked down for a kiss. “So, so much,” she breathed just before their mouths met.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, so I have to ask... how much fluff is too much? Are we there yet? Because I have more.... ;)

Fighting with the Fishes

Chapter Summary

Kara has a plan, but so does Lena, Lizzy has a problem with communication, and Winn would really like to be left alone.

Chapter Notes

Ugh, this one took forever! But here it is, jam packed with fluffiness and a little bit of action. :) Enjoy!

They kissed and touched exploring soft skin under each other’s clothes until Lena could barely keep her eyes open anymore. It had been a good day, but it had also been a long day. Still, she growled a sleepy protest when Kara rolled them over, propping herself up on one elbow and tugging Lena’s camisole more or less back into place.

“Mhmm,” she caught Kara’s hand in hers; not at all pleased with the backwards direction this was taking. “I wasn’t done with you yet...”

“You’re falling asleep.”

“No I’m no-” Lena yawned, both interrupting herself and irredeemably undermining her own position. She scowled but Kara only smiled fondly, raising Lena’s hand to her lips and kissing each of her fingers in turn until the scowl had faded.

“Slow, remember?”

“I think we have very different ideas of what that word means...” Lena said, but it was a half-hearted complaint at best. She really was tired.

“Right now, it means go to sleep,” Kara chided her.

“Well, come back down here then.” Lena yanked on a handful of her shirt. “If I can’t get my hands down your pants tonight then at the very least I want to snuggle.”

“Lena!” Kara whined, flushing, but she let Lena pull and push her into place until she was on her back with Lena in her customary position; half spooning and half on top of her, head pillowed on her chest, and one leg thrown over both of hers. Running her fingers through Lena’s hair once they were settled, Kara pressed a chaste kiss to the top of her head. “I love you...”

“I love you too,” Lena mumbled. “Even if you are a terrible tease.”

“I’m the tease?” Kara laughed. “How exactly?”
“All of this...” Lena gestured vaguely to all of Kara.

“This?”

“Muscles.”

“My muscles are teasing you?”

“Yes.”

“That doesn’t make any sense.”

“Says the one with the muscles.”

“What about these then?” Kara ran a fingertip lightly down the length of Lena’s leg from hip to knee and back up again.

“Hmm... that’s right,” Suddenly a lot less tired, Lena crossed her arms over Kara’s chest, resting her chin on her wrists so she could look up at her. “You never did finish telling me all the ways I distract you...So, you like my legs?” she asked coyly, sliding the limb in question a little higher across Kara’s thighs. “What else?”

“Nope...” Kara pushed her knee back down, ignoring Lena’s pout. “We’re not starting that up again at...” she looked over at the clock. “...nearly one in the morning.”

Lena sighed. “You’re no fun.”

“You were falling asleep five minutes ago! When you do finally get your hands down my pants, I’d like you to stay awake long enough to... um...you know...” she was blushing again.

Lena grinned wickedly. “Oh? Do I? Remind me. What was it that you’d like me to do once I’m down there?”

“That’s it,” Kara said, rolling over onto her side away from Lena, tumbling her off into a tangle of pillows and blankets. “I’m not talking to you anymore tonight. And she calls me a tease,” she added in a mutter.

“Oh, come on!” Lena pleaded, half-laughing and tugging on Kara’s shoulder. “I’m sorry, I’ll be good!”

“No you won’t.”

“That’s true...” Lena abandoned her attempts to turn Kara back over and fitted herself in behind her instead, wrapping an arm around her waist and nuzzling into the back of her neck. She snuck her fingers up under the hem of Kara’s shirt. “But do you really want me to?”

“If I say no, will you go to sleep? Because our kid is going to be up in about six hours, and Lena, I love you, but you are grumpy when you’re tired.”

Lena mock gasped. “I see we’ve reached the brutal honesty stage of our marriage...”

Kara groaned, rolling back over and pinning Lena to the bed. “Okay, five more minutes, and then we’re going to sleep, deal?”

“Fifteen.”
“Ten, and you can take my shirt off.”

“You’ll leave it off this time?”

“No promises.”

“Hmm...” Lena pretended to consider it, deliberately running her teeth over her lower lip. Kara rolled her eyes, but Lena could feel her heartbeat kick up a notch. “Fine, the shirt stays off.”

“Deal,” Lena agreed smugly, already tugging the hem up and over her ribs.

*****

Lena was not ready to get up when Lizzy started calling for them the next morning. Ten minutes had turned into twenty, and then half an hour when Kara managed to get her shirt off too, and they had both gotten lost in the sensations of skin on skin, wandering hands and kisses that seemed to reach right down into her soul. Lena had never done this before. She’d had good sex and bad sex, a lot of fun sex, and some sex she’d regretted... but aside from a little awkward making out in high school, Lena hadn’t been one to bother with a lot of foreplay. What she and Kara were doing... it wasn’t even sex, not yet, but somehow it was more intimate and more satisfying than anything she’d done with any of her other partners.

Not, that that made it easier to drag herself out of bed after less than five hours of sleep.

“Kara?” she groped across the rumpled sheets, opening her eyes when she realized she was alone. There was however a piece of paper tucked under a still-steaming cup of tea on the bedside table, with a hastily scrawled S, that was probably short for sorry or Super emergency. Either way, Kara wasn’t here.

“I’m coming,” she muttered when Lizzy’s wail reached a new and much shriller pitch. Her shirt was on the floor, and she pulled it over her head before picking up the cup of tea on her way out of the bedroom and taking a gulp as she crossed the hallway to the nursery. What she really needed was coffee, but caffeine in the hand... and if she was being honest, she was way too much of a sap not to drink anything Kara had taken the time to make for her.

“Mommy!” Lizzy chirped when Lena opened the door, her bright grin an instant antidote to at least half of Lena’s grouchiness. “Up, p’eas!”

“Good morning, sweetheart.” Lena set the cup down on the dresser and picked her up, holding her close and just breathing her in for a minute. Lizzy was happy enough to snuggle with her Mommy, wrapping her chubby arms around Lena’s neck. It still didn’t seem quite real. Lena wasn’t sure how long it would be until she could stop waiting for the axe to fall, for all of this to feel less like a cheat and more like something she’d earned. Maybe once they’d found the last two pieces of the talisman she would be able to relax.

“Br’fast?” Lizzy asked eventually, her little tummy rumbling.

Lena laughed. “You and your Mama... all right, let’s get you changed and feed you.” She suited actions to words, and Lizzy was soon in her booster seat, munching contentedly on cheerios and apple slices while Lena made herself a pot of coffee and a bowl of fruit and yogurt.

Kara flew in through the balcony doors just as she was pouring the coffee, landing neatly in the living room before joining her in the kitchen. “Good morning!” she said sunnily, hugging Lena from
behind and pressing a kiss to the back of her neck.

“Morning...” Lena turned around in Kara’s arms, leaving the coffee on the counter. She caught the next kiss on her lips, tasting just the barest trace of ash and when she traced the S on Kara’s chest, her finger came away stained with soot. “You’ve been busy already, I see. Anything interesting?”

Kara shrugged. “Maybe? There was a fire at that apartment building Alex and I were staking out the other night. No casualties, but the timing is a little suspicious.”

“Arson?”

“That’s what Alex thinks. She and Maggie are still there looking for clues.”

“Do you need to go back?”

“Nope, looks like we have the day off.”

Lena frowned. “We’re not going after the next piece of the talisman?”

Kara’s smile faded. “You don’t want to take a break? This week has been crazy, I thought maybe we could spend the day together, be a normal family for once...?”

“That sounds lovely,” Lena admitted. “But... I think I need to get this done.” She looked over Kara’s shoulder. Lizzy was carefully peeling the skin off the back of her apple slices and dropping the little curling shreds onto the floor. “Please? I won’t be able to believe she’s really ours until it’s over.”

“Oh... sure, I mean you’re right of course.” If Kara was disappointed, she hid it well. “I’ll let Winn know. Alex is busy, but he can put a team on standby for backup if we need it. Craft store or Library?”

“Craft store,” Lena decided. She had an idea...

*****

Kara wasn’t disappointed. She wasn’t. Lena was right, they needed to get this done, but what if something went wrong? Kara was usually the one ready to charge into anything, fists up. She liked to take things head-on, and darn the fallout. Change frightened her, but a challenge? That she could do. This was different. This was everything, and Kara couldn’t deny selfishly wishing for a few more days with her little family before she had to face the risk of losing them.

By the time they got to the craft store though, Kara was ready to make the best of it. They were still together, and the store wasn’t that big. It couldn’t take them too long to find what they were looking for, and then maybe, if Eliza was willing to watch Lizzy for the evening, Kara could take Lena out for dinner... like a real date... Which at this point should absolutely not be making her nervous, but the swooping feeling in her middle didn’t seem to have gotten that message.

Lizzy however, was not cooperating. And neither was Lena.

Much like the way they’d tackled the museum, Kara had planned to do a systematic sweep of the store, aisle by aisle, relying on Lizzy to narrow down the search. But from the moment they stepped through the front doors, nothing went according to plan. Lizzy had apparently gone deaf, refusing to listen to a word Kara said and darting from aisle to aisle, crashing into one hapless man’s legs and then pointing up at him yelling “Ish!” whatever that meant, and shrieking when Kara pulled her away. She knocked tubes of sparkly paint off the racks, toppled a display of paper crafts, and finally
got herself wound up in a ball of string. Kara apologized profusely to the harried looking customer service rep who stepped in to help her unwind her unrepentant daughter like a tangled marionette, because Lena had disappeared.

“It’s okay ma’am,” he said, unwrapping the last few feet from around Lizzy’s ankle while Kara held her. “It happens more often than you’d think. Can I get you a cart? They have seatbelts.”

“Please,” Kara said, because she wasn’t above strapping the kid in at this point.

Lizzy did not take well to captivity. She struggled against the seatbelt, methodically examining the straps and snaps and clips for weaknesses before giving up, crossing her arms and fixing Kara with a glare of utter betrayal. “‘Izzy, out!’” she demanded.

“No way kiddo,” Kara said without a trace of remorse. “You blew it.”

Lizzy stuck her tongue out at her.

Kara returned the favour.

Thwarted, Lizzy was reduced to sulking and ignoring every effort Kara made to interest her in looking for anything that might be glowing. She did acknowledge Kara’s existence long enough to tug on her sleeve and point at a man wheeling a cart full of yarn. “‘Ish!’ she said again. “Mama, see!”

“That’s a different man,” Kara said wearily, turning the cart around and pushing them in the opposite direction. “Come on we need to find the blue glowing thing, all right?” Lizzy just huffed and went back to ignoring her. All in all, Kara was relieved to finally find Lena back in the paints section. She was on her phone, though she hastily ended the conversation and hung up when she saw them.

“Any luck?”

“With the talisman? No. With nearly getting kicked out of the store on other hand...”

Lena had the grace to look guilty. “I’m sorry,” she said, putting her phone away. “There was something I had to sort out. Where have you looked?”

“Nowhere, because someone...” Kara narrowed her eyes at Lizzy, who was still refusing to look at her. “Is exercising her right to a peaceful protest.”

“I’m guessing there’s a reason she’s contained?”

“So many reasons,” Kara said feelingly.

Lizzy looked up at Lena with a piteous pout, eyes wide and glistening. Lena just raised an eyebrow, and she dropped the act with a sigh. “‘Izzy ́isten,” she said grudgingly.

“Good. Should we give her a second chance?” Lena asked Kara, waiting for her nod before unbuckling Lizzy and lifting her out of the cart. “Now, you can either hold my hand, or go back in the cart,” she said, setting her down on the ground. “Which is it going to be?”

Lizzy took Lena’s hand, eyeing the cart with distaste.

“How do you do that?”

“I guess you’re just the fun Mom,” Lena said with a smirk.
“I can live with that,” Kara admitted, following them out of the paint aisle. “I call birthday party planning, and field trips! You can be the one who embarrasses her when she brings home a boy.”

“Or a girl,” Lena added, “or neither.”

“Ooh, good point. What about an alien?”

“I think it would be fairly hypocritical of me to object to that,” Lena pointed out.

“Fair enough.”

Lizzy, considering that she wasn’t quite two, had no opinion on the topic. She walked docilely enough beside Lena, craning her head around trying to look everywhere at once, but so far she didn’t seem drawn to anything until they reached the end of the paper aisle and she planted her feet, pointing at a third man just pushing his cart into one of the checkout aisles.

“‘Ish!’ she shouted, pulling on Lena’s hand. “Mommy, ‘ish!”

The man glanced over his shoulder at them, looking extremely uncomfortable with the attention and ducking his head as he turned back to his cart.

Lena looked at Kara. “What’s an ‘ish?”

Kara shrugged. “I have no idea. She’s been yelling it at different people since we got here, though.”

Lizzy threw her whole weight against Lena’s hand, actually pulling her a step or two towards the check out. “‘Ish go ‘way!” Unable to get any further, she dropped to the floor in a last act of defiance, eeling out of Lena’s grip when she tried to pick her up.

Concerned now, Kara knelt down beside her. “Lizzy, we don’t know what you want...”

“‘Ish,” Lizzy mumbled, her face flat against the floor.

“Kiddo, I’m sorry, but I don’t know what an ‘ish is...”

Lizzy lifted her head. “Mama, g’asses!” she demanded, holding out her hand. “See, ‘ish.”

“My glasses?” Kara looked up at Lena, who seemed just as mystified as she was.

“It’s worth a try.”

Kara slipped off her glasses. Lizzy scrambled to her feet and took them, pointing again towards the check out. “Mama, see!”

Kara did see, falling back onto her heels in shock. “Oh my gosh... he’s a giant fish!”

“He’s a what?” Lena hissed, helping her up.

“A fish...” Kara blinked, and he was just a man, but when she used her X-ray vision there was a giant fish skeleton standing there behind the cart, towering over the human skeletons. “He’s using some kind of projection...” she blinked again and there was a different man standing there. “And he keeps shifting it... probably because Lizzy spotted him. Sorry kiddo, that was my bad. You’re getting, like three cookies when we get home.”

“’Izzy, Cookah.” Lizzy grinned, her earlier exasperation forgotten.
“Kara, he must have been here for the piece of the talisman...” Lena said, her fingers tightening on Kara’s arm. “We have to stop him before he leaves.”

“I’m on it.” Kara took her glasses back from Lizzy and slipped them on. “Call Winn once I’m gone, but tell him to have the team stand back unless I need them. There are kids here, and I don’t want to cause a scene unless I have to.”

“Good luck,” Lena said, tugging her in for a quick kiss. Kara knew her grin must have been as wide as Lizzy’s when she pulled away, because Lena rolled her eyes and gave her a playful little shove. “Get out of here!”

Kara went, sneaking out through one of the back doors into an alley behind the store and taking a quick look around before spinning into her suit and taking off. She flew over the store and landed right in front of the fish man as he carried his bags out the front door.

“I think you have something of mine,” Kara said, crossing her arms. “Hand it over, and we can both walk away from this.”

He gulped, the sides of his neck flaring out, and his skin taking on the sheen of scales as his projection faltered. “I... um... I don’t know what you’re talking about...” He burbled, his voice a gargling sort of mumble. “I’m just a harmless Saturnyn, shopping for my knitting supplies... I don’t want any trouble.”

“Right... then you won’t mind me taking a look through those bags?”

The Saturnyn clutched his shopping bags to his chest, arms lengthening, and a row of spiney fins standing up from his neck and back as he shrugged off the projection, growing about three feet, and looking more like a fish by the second. “I don’t think so, Supergirl!” He hissed through sharpening teeth.

“I guess we’re doing this the hard way then...” Kara muttered. “So much for my date.” She launched herself at the Saturnyn, but he was faster than she had expected, moving through the air as if it was water. He flipped around and caught her with a swipe of his powerful tail, sending her crashing into a row of shopping carts.

“Oh, that stung a little,” Kara admitted, untangling herself from the pile of twisted metal and leaping back into the sky. “Time for a fish fry...” She fired a double line of heat vision across the parking lot, cutting off his escape route and singeing a few scales. He doubled back with a shrill scream that made her ears ring. The Saturnyn could “swim,” it seemed, five to ten feet off the ground, but it didn’t look like he could get much higher than that, so Kara stayed over his head, hemming him in with her heat vision when he tried to escape.

He was huge though, and looked something like a cross between an angler fish and an eel, with a lot of teeth, and long arms that ended in wicked looking claws. His shrieks hurt, and he was strong. Kara was pretty sure she was stronger, but his long body and speed made it difficult to close with him. So she stayed between him and the store, slowly but surely driving him back, unwilling to get close enough to for him to reach her until she had a plan. He still had the shopping bags, looped over of his many fins and held tightly against his body.

“What’s the matter Supergirl?” he hissed, his jaws hanging open in a threatening smile. “Afraid to fight me? Or is there something back there you’re protecting?”

Kara hesitated. He couldn’t know about... could he? She tapped on her communicator. “Winn? How far away is that team of yours?”
“Black van around back,” Winn said. “They’re ready on your signal. You want an assist with this thing? He’s seriously nasty looking.”

“No, I need them to evacuate the store. I think it knows who I am...”

“Ooh... that is not good. Okay, they’re on it.”

“Thanks Winn.”

“No problem, Supergirl. We’ll keep them safe.”

One fear allayed, Kara turned her attention back to the eerily grinning fish and narrowed her eyes. “Last chance to surrender,” she said. “I’m not going to offer again.”

The Saturnyn just laughed; a terrible viscous sound. “Why surrender, when the jelly in your bones will be delicious?”

Kara shuddered. “Okay, that’s just gross... now you’re definitely going down.”

“Ready when you are.”

Kara’s hopes of not causing a scene were irrevocably dashed. The fight was long and messy, and she was bruised and bloody before it was over. Kara was stronger, but the Saturnyn was fast and agile, making it difficult to strike more than glancing blows. and its scales were edged in something that sliced right through her kryptonian skin. The scratches healed almost immediately, but deeper ones left behind a smear of blood, and even brief pain was distracting.

It might have gone on longer than it did, but a child’s scream from the direction of the store where Winn’s team was ushering out the last of the customers brought the Saturnyn’s head whipping around, and he darted towards the sound, giving Kara the opening she needed. Diving down, she drove both fists into the back of his head, slamming him into the pavement, and stunning him long enough to use her freeze breath to encase his entire skull in a block of ice.

“Hah!” she muttered, too tired even to gloat with any energy. “Now whose bones are jelly?” She banged on the ice, right above the eye that was still glaring at her. “Winn,” she said into the comms. “I have a few tons of frozen fish here for pick up. I’d suggest a very large cell.”

“Roger that.” Winn sounded impressed. “I’ve got your girls safe with me. Please come get them. Lena is lovely really, but she’s trying to redesign my entire system here, and Lizzy is eyeing the weaponry. I’m not worried for myself, but Mon El is around somewhere, and she really doesn’t like that guy.”

Kara snorted, amused in spite of her exhaustion. “You should listen to Lena,” she said. “She could probably make some improvements. And tell Lizzy her cookies are dependent on her not touching anything sharp. I’ll be there in a few minutes.”

She unhooked the shopping bags from the Saturnyn’s fin, waiting for the people in uniforms to get there with their tranquilizers and restraints before flying over to the DEO. Lena and Lizzy were right where Winn had said they were, Lena hanging over his shoulder and pointing something out on the screen, Lizzy on the floor playing with something that looked alien, but hopefully not dangerous.

“Mama!” Lizzy called. “Ish?”

“The bad fish is taken care of,” Kara assured her, handing over the shopping bags for her to rummage through. Hopefully the piece of the talisman really was in there, or this had been a very
“You’re bleeding!” Lena sounded like she couldn’t decide whether to be worried or furious, stepping around Lizzy to reach for Kara, her touch gentle as she brushed her hair back, looking for injuries.

“It’s okay,” Kara said, catching her hands. “I’m all healed.” She wiped some of the blood away, revealing perfect skin underneath. “See?”

Lena frowned, unconvinced. “You’re not trying to be stoic, are you? Because I’ll call Alex…”

“I really am fine,” Kara promised her. “Just tired. So…” she added, dropping her hands to Lena’s hips and urging her a little closer. “Do I get a kiss for saving the day?”

“Mmm... at least one,” Lena murmured, tangling her fingers in Kara’s cape where it draped over her shoulders and leaning up on her tip toes to press a soft kiss to her lips.

“Really?” Winn demanded. “Here? Do secret identities mean nothing to you people?”

“No one is making you look,” Lena told him.

“Yeah, but I can still hear it.”

Kara stole one more kiss, just to make a point, before letting Lena go so they could see what Lizzy had found. She had taken nearly every ball of yarn out of the bags, tossing them around her like a colourful little sea of wool. The last one she pulled out was a bright yellow, chunky and shot through with streaks of orange and vermilion, and blue fire flickered around it, licking up Lizzy’s hands and making her grin. She held it up to Kara. “B’ue!”

“Four cookies,” Kara told her, taking it and handing it to Winn. “And we’re ordering pizza.”

Lena sighed.

“With a side salad,” Kara added.

*****

Kara got cleaned up and changed at the DEO, and then let Vasquez drive them home. She would have flown them there, but the Saturnyn’s words had her worried. One bounty hunter at least might know her identity. They had this one in custody, but had it figured her out in the craft store, or had it already known? They suspected the Reptilian alien they’d captured at the Museum had been working with a group, was the Saturnyn part of that team? And if so, who else knew who she was? Until they knew for sure, she didn’t want to risk Supergirl being seen anywhere near Lena Luthor in public. She wrote up a quick report for Alex before they left, hoping her sister would have some ideas on how to handle it.

Lena seemed distracted in the elevator on the way up to their apartment, checking her phone repeatedly and firing off several texts.

“Everything okay at work?” Kara asked her as the doors slid open.

“What? Oh, it’s fine.” Lena said, looking shifty. “I arranged for something to be done today. I was just making sure it was finished.”

“Is it?”

“We’ll see...” Lena unlocked the door, ushering Lizzy and Kara in ahead of her. “Come on,” she
added, taking Kara’s hand with a secretive little smile and leading her to the spare room. “You wouldn’t let me buy you a restaurant, so I thought this might do instead? It’s not entirely set up yet, but you’ll probably want to do that yourself...”

Kara’s jaw dropped as she followed Lena into the sunny little room. Shelves had been hung on two of the walls and piled with paints, pallets, canvases and brushes of all shapes and sizes. The carpet had been rolled up and taken away, leaving the hardwood floor bare and gleaming. A stack of drop clothes was in one corner, and a collection of sleek silver light fixtures in the other, just waiting for Kara to decide where she wanted them for the best lighting. A pair of beautiful dark wooden easels stood proudly in the center of the room, little tables beside them for paints and brushes, and there was a drawing table under the window, with crisp white paper and freshly sharpened pencils ready and waiting.

“You did this?” she breathed, turning slowly around to take it all in.

“I picked it all out,” Lena said. “And I asked Eliza to come over and let the delivery people in. That’s what I was doing at the craft store... Is it okay?” she sounded nervous. “I wasn’t entirely sure what I was doing...”

“Okay? You...” Kara swallowed past a lump in her throat. “Come here...” she pulled Lena into her arms, tipping her head back and kissing her with all of the fire and passion they’d been holding in check since the night of the Gala. Lena’s back hit the wall with a thump before Kara even realized they were moving, and she moaned into Kara’s mouth holding her tightly when she might have pulled back.

“Don’t you dare,” she growled, nipping at her lower lip and sliding a knee in between Kara’s as she tugged her closer.

“Lena,” Kara protested weakly, whimpering when Lena pressed a kiss under the corner of her jaw and lifted her leg a little higher. “Lizzy...”

Lena groaned, dropping her head back against the wall. “Fuck, right. Toddler unsupervised in the kitchen. Not the best time.”

“Not really,” Kara agreed. “But...I could call Eliza, see if she could take Lizzy overnight. I was going to anyway, because I wanted to ask you out on a date, but as romantic gestures go...” She looked around again at the beautiful studio Lena had given her. “I think this beats dinner.”

“You were going to ask me out on a date?” Lena’s smile was smug, but her eyes were soft.

“Yeah...” Kara ducked her head, blushing. “I thought it would be nice. Slow, you know?”

“Hmm...” Lena toyed with the hair at the back of Kara’s neck. “Darling, can we please agree to never use that word again? I think we’re ready to speed things up, don’t you?”

“Definitely! I-” Kara was interrupted by a crash from the kitchen, followed by the unmistakeable tinkling of broken glass.

They sighed in unison.

“I’ll get the kid,” Kara said.

“I’ll get the broom,” Lena added.

“But tonight?”
“Tonight.”

Chapter End Notes

Okay, so anyone reading this for the plot? Just skip chapter 22. Don’t even look at it. There will be no plot there, and I'm not even sorry. ;)

The apartment was quiet when Lena got back from dropping Lizzy off at Eliza’s, and from what she had meant to be a quick stop in at the office which had somehow turned into two hours. She kicked her heels off in the front hall, briefly considered leaving them where they’d fallen, then picked them up and put them away neatly in the closet. She left Kara’s shoes where they were; the right one knocked half off the mat and the left one fallen over beside it. She’d gotten used to the clutter. Become fond of it really. It was proof, in a way, that someone else lived here.

“Kara?” She called, hanging up her keys and coming around the corner into the living room.

“Here.” Kara was sitting on the couch, feet resting on the edge of the coffee table and her knees drawn up to make a platform for one of her new sketchbooks. The tip of her tongue was caught between her teeth, and she glared down at the page as her pencil moved furiously against the paper. Lena couldn’t see what she was drawing from this angle, but whatever it was, it had her full attention.

“What?” Kara blinked up at her, a smear of charcoal across the bridge of her nose. “Oh, no I just wanted to try out some of my new supplies while I waited for you to get home.” She tipped her chin up for a proper kiss, which Lena provided of course.

“Should I be jealous?” Lena asked, crossing the room to lean over the back of the couch and press a kiss to the top of Kara’s head.

“And?” she asked, licking the faint taste of chocolate from her lips as she drew back. Apparently someone else had been into the cookies.

Kara held the sketchbook up to show her, the tips of her fingers smudged and dark on the white edges of the page. It was a rough sketch of the view outside their balcony windows; tall buildings drawn in wide, angular strokes against the setting sun. “I’m out of practice,” she admitted, setting the sketchbook down on the table and picking up a cup of tea. She wrinkled her nose when she took a sip. “Ugh...”

Lena chuckled at her expression. “Cold?”
“I didn’t realize I’d been drawing that long...” Kara tipped her glasses down, but Lena snagged the mug out of her hands before she could zap it, taking it back to the kitchen and dumping it down the sink.

“No lasers,” she chided her, rinsing it out. “We have a perfectly good kettle, we can make more tea.”

“But that takes so long!” Kara whined.

“What’s the rush?” Lena asked teasingly, one eyebrow quirked.

Kara pouted at her over the back of the couch. “You were gone forever!”

Lena filled the kettle and put it on to boil. “I’m sorry. Eliza wanted to talk, and then there was a minor emergency at work.”

“Is everything okay?”

Lena got two clean cups down out of the cupboard and unscrewed her canister of Earl Grey, measuring it out into the matching silver tea strainers. Kara usually just threw in a tea bag or three, but Lena liked to do things right. “It is now.”

“Was Eliza being nosy again?”

“She worries,” Lena said, opting for a vague answer over the truth, because Eliza meant well, and Kara could be a little overprotective.

Kara snorted at that, but she let it go.

The kettle whistled, and Lena finished making the tea, adding in the cream and sugar and taking both cups into the living room where she set them down on the coffee table and joined Kara on the couch, tucking her legs up underneath her. She reached for Kara’s sketchbook once she was settled. “May I?”

Kara nodded.

Lena flipped through the first few pages. There were a dozen or so simple still life studies as well as the landscape; a vase of flowers, a pile of Lizzy’s toys abandoned on the carpet and bits a pieces of the living room, all picked out in loving detail. “You’re very good...”

Kara ducked her head, fidgeting with her glasses. “They’re just sketches. I’ll have to wait until I can get things set up before I can paint.”

“Do you have everything you need?” Lena closed the sketchbook again, running her fingers over the cover. “I have their catalogue here somewhere, I could...”

Kara laid a hand over hers, stilling her fidgeting. “I have more than I need, I promise. Thank you.”

Lena shrugged. “It was nothing. I monopolized a sales clerk and made a few phone calls. I would do more, if you’d let me...”

Kara shook her head, drawing Lena’s hand into both of hers. “It’s not nothing.” She turned Lena’s hand over, stroking a thumb down her palm and coaxing her fingers to uncurl. “I left a lot of myself behind, on Krypton. I had to fit in here, be normal. Art was one of the few things I could still do, but after I became Supergirl, I kind of stopped making time for it. I guess because it didn’t seem as important as saving the world. But... you made room for it. You make room for me, even when I
forget to make room for myself. I mean, before all this, you had your own bed, your own home, your own life, and then you woke up with a wife, this impossible kid and all my crazy, nosy extended family, and you just... made room for us. All of us!”

Lena stared at her in disbelief. “Are you serious? Kara... before all of this, I was alone. The city hated me, my employees didn’t trust me and every member of my family was either dead, in prison, or a wanted fugitive, and one of them was actively trying to have me killed. Then this happens, and suddenly I’m a wife and a mom, a beloved role model, a respected boss, and I have all of these people in my life who actually care about me. You and Lizzy are not an imposition Kara. You’re a gift. One I didn’t deserve, and I certainly haven’t earned...”

Kara frowned. “Don’t say that. You deserve so much more than you think you do. I may have lost my family, and my planet. But I’ve always been loved. I had my parents on Krypton, and then my earth family; Alex, Eliza and Jeremiah. Kal, J’onn, James, and Winn, even Miss. Grant... If I’m strong, it’s because they’ve made me strong. You never had that, and you’re still the strongest and best and most amazing woman I know.”

Lena dropped her gaze to her lap, where Kara was still holding her hand, stroking down from her palm to the tips of her fingers, soft and soothing. “I want to believe that,” she admitted. “I do... but I just... I can’t-”

Kara took Lena’s face between her hands, tipping her head up so she could meet her eyes. “Then let me show you.”

She leaned forward at Lena’s nod, catching her mouth in a kiss that was sure and sweet, soft, but with a hint of steel underneath. This wasn’t the bashful Kara Danvers, this was Kara Zor El; last scion of an elite alien race, and the contrast turned Lena on like the sudden flare of a bright light in a dark room. She was usually the one to deepen their kisses, but this time it was Kara who demanded entrance, slipping her tongue into Lena’s mouth while she buried her fingers in Lena’s hair, tugging at the pins holding it up and tossing them aside until it tumbled down loose around her shoulders. She pressed forward, drawing one knee up and onto the couch so that she could get closer, releasing Lena’s mouth only long enough for her to take a breath before diving back in. She dropped her hands to the collar of Lena’s blouse, nimble fingers making short work of the buttons, the backs of her knuckles grazing Lena’s skin as she worked her way to the bottom. “Kara,” Lena murmured when her shirt was hanging open and Kara had abandoned her mouth for her neck, kissing her way down from the corner of her jaw. “Are you sure...?” She had no idea what she was going to do if Kara wasn’t.

Kara licked the hollow of her throat, breathing just a hint of ice over the damp skin and making Lena’s pulse jump. “Very sure.” She glanced up, her eyes nearly black. “Should I keep going?”

“Please,” Lena near-whimpered, squirming as Kara’s kisses trailed even lower. Her hands were cool against Lena’s overheated skin when she brought them back to her sides in a smooth caress from her waist up and over her ribs, deftly unhooking her bra before sitting back to push both bra and blouse off over her shoulders. Her touch was gentle as she slid the thin straps and silky material down Lena’s arms and tugged them free, dropping everything onto the floor before leaning back in. Lena sighed at the first brush of Kara’s mouth across the top of her breasts, and the possessive curl of Kara’s hands around her waist, pulling her up and onto her knees. This was as far as they had gone before, and Lena was teetering on the edge of surrender, wanting to jump, but afraid to let go, because if she took the leap now, and then she lost this...
Kara must have felt her struggle, because she eased back and lifted her head to press a light kiss to Lena’s lips. “I love you,” she said softly, her grip around Lena’s waist gentling. “And I want you, but if you’re not ready, we can wait…”

“No,” Lena said firmly, sliding her hands up Kara’s arms to her shoulders and pulling her back in. “I don’t want to wait. Not anymore. I just want you, preferably naked.”

“You first,” Kara said, smirking when Lena had expected a blush and causing a slow, sweet rush of heat to bloom low in her belly. She captured Lena’s lips in another kiss before she could retort, this one decidedly less innocent than the last, continuing to press forward until Lena was laying flat on her back on the couch with Kara hovering over her.

Mouth otherwise occupied, Kara brought a hand to Lena’s breasts instead, stroking gently over the soft skin, exploring each in turn as she nipped at her lower lip. Lena arched into the contact, breath catching in the back of her throat as Kara’s touch grew surer and more confident. She toyed with the short hairs at the back of Kara’s neck, torn between holding her in place and urging her downwards. Kara made the decision for her, stealing one last kiss from her lips before moving to her jaw, her throat and the graceful sweep of her collar bone.

Lena couldn’t keep still, the wet heat of Kara’s mouth against her skin was burning her from the outside in. She squirmed underneath her, moaning softly when Kara shifted, pressing her firmly against the couch with the weight of her body before continuing, until the gentle swell was under her lips. Lena gasped as Kara took her into her mouth, tongue toying with one stiff peak as her fingers played with the other. She wrapped her legs around Kara’s hips, urging her even closer, and it was Kara’s turn to gasp, taking a moment to catch her breath before switching to the other breast.

Her technique was unrefined, but genuine, and fuck if it wasn’t working well enough that Lena almost didn’t notice what Kara’s other hand was up to until the button and zipper on her skirt were already undone, and Kara was hesitating, lifting up and looking at her for permission before slipping her fingers through the gap and touching her there for the first time.

Lena had taken to wearing her nicest lingerie, just in case, and the rough slide of wet lace between her legs made her throw her head back against the arm of the couch with a long, low moan. Kara was tentative at first, eyes wide and soft, and her mouth slightly open in amazement as Lena came undone under her fingers. She stroked her through her underwear, fingertips gliding slickly up and down until Lena was half mad with it, grabbing a fistful of Kara’s shirt and rocking her hips up against her hand, desperate for more speed, more friction, more pressure, just more...

Finally, finally, she pushed the soaking fabric aside and dipped deeper, still without rhythm or pattern, but with that last barrier between them gone, Lena didn’t even care. She was lost in the sensation, whimpering at each wondering touch and dragging Kara down into a wet, needy kiss when she pressed inside at last. It had been a long time since her last lover, but Lena had been on edge for days and it was Kara and she opened up to her like they were made for each other.

Lena set the pace at first, but Kara caught on quickly, taking over and pushing her further; two fingers, and then three, moving in and out, deeper and faster, driving Lena closer and closer to the edge with every stroke. Panting and trembling, shocked at how quickly Kara had reduced her to a shaking needy mess, Lena could only cling to her, one arm around her neck, the other hand still tangled in her shirt, face pressed against the side of her throat. She cried out when Kara changed the angle, fingers sliding up in a sharp curl and the pad of her thumb dragging over her in just the right way, once, twice... and then Lena was arcing up into her hand with a rough “fuck,” a wave of pure pleasure breaking over her and leaving her whining and gasping for air.

“Did I... Did you?” Kara sounded anxious, breathless, sliding her fingers free and hovering over her.
“Are you okay?”

Lena kissed her in lieu of an answer, partly because she wasn’t quite sure she could form any meaningful words just yet, and partly because she needed to feel Kara’s mouth under hers, solid and real.

“I’m wonderful,” she assured her once she was confident she could speak again. “You were wonderful.”

“Oh.” Now Kara blushed, her cheeks reddening as she furtively wiped her hand on her pants. “Good. I um... I wasn’t exactly sure what I was doing...I mean I uh... know how everything works—”

Lena stopped her with a finger over her lips. “Shh...”

“Okay, but...”

Lena pressed more firmly. “Kara,” she said reasonably. “If you want a point by point critique, I would be happy to give you one. If, however, you would rather have a practical demonstration, I suggest you stop talking and take me to bed. This couch is very comfortable, but I prefer a bit more room to work, if you know what I mean...”

Kara’s eyes widened, then the room became a blur, and they were suddenly in their room, on their bed. Lena’s skirt and underwear had been left behind in the living room and Kara was kissing her running her fingers through her hair and pressing her back against the pillows. Which was lovely of course, but it wouldn’t do at all. Lena pushed on her shoulder, rolling them over and sitting up, straddling Kara’s hips and tugging on the hem of her shirt. “We’re a little uneven here...do you mind?”

Kara raised her arms obediently, only flushing a little as Lena pulled her shirt off over her head and tossed it aside, revealing a modest, but pretty, blue bra, with delicate scalloped edges. Lena traced a line down from the hollow of Kara’s throat to the front clasp, hooking a finger underneath it and biting her lip just to see Kara gulp. “Shall I?”

Kara nodded sharply, Jaw clenched, hands knotted in the sheets and every muscle tensing between Lena’s knees.

Lena sighed, leaving the bra where it was for the moment to untangle Kara’s fingers from their death grip on the bedding. “Relax, Kara...” she urged her, guiding Kara’s hands to rest on her thighs instead, and leaning down for a gentle kiss. “You took such good care of me...” she whispered into her ear. “Now let me take care of you.” She kissed her again, soft, easy kisses, until Kara started to relax, her hands sliding up Lena’s thighs to her hips and pulling her down more firmly against her.

Lena resisted the urge to rock against those amazing stomach muscles, already more than ready for round two. She suspected that Kara was not-so-subtly encouraging just that, arching up underneath her and sucking Lena’s lower lip into her mouth, but she held firm. This was Kara’s turn. Stilling Kara with a hand on her chest, Lena shifted back so that she could undo her pants, slowly and deliberately sliding the button free and pulling down the zipper while holding Kara’s gaze. Kara’s breath caught, hitching and hissing out between her teeth, but she didn’t freeze up again, lifting her hips so that Lena could take her pants off, sliding them down those long, muscular legs with near reverence. Her underwear matched her bra, and Lena took a moment just to enjoy the view.

Kara blushed under the scrutiny, but she lifted her chin, channeling a little of that Supergirl arrogance in spite of her embarrassment. “Like what you see?”
“Very much...” Lena didn’t bother to hide her approval. She ducked her head to press a kiss over Kara’s heart, smiling at the rapid beat under her lips. Kara slid tentative fingers into her hair, combing it back over her shoulders and very slightly urging her downwards. Lena obliged, trailing kisses down to the edge of her bra, hands fanning out across Kara’s ribs, her thumbs just grazing the underside of her breasts. She kissed her through the sheer material, catching the fabric between her teeth and just grazing the soft skin underneath, teasing her mercilessly, until it was Kara herself who fumbled to undo the clasp with shaking fingers, baring herself to Lena’s attentions.

Lena rewarded her with a brief kiss, quickly bringing her mouth and tongue back to Kara’s breasts, hungry for a taste of what she’d only touched. Kara whined in the back of her throat, modesty abandoned as she clutched the back of Lena’s neck and held her in place. Lena nipped sensitive skin, and Kara moaned, pushing her hips up against Lena’s, seeking more.

Lena took a deep shaking breath, sliding a hand down from her waist and pulling Kara’s knee up and over her hip, shifting so that she could rock forward, pressing a bare thigh between Kara’s legs, and getting some much needed friction for herself as well.

“Lena...” Kara gasped, scrabbling at her shoulders, her waist, her hips, trying to pull her closer and move against her at the same time. “I don’t... I...” she stuttered. “Don’t stop...please...”

Lena abandoned her breasts for her mouth, kissing her deeply as she set a steady rhythm, swallowing Kara’s wail when she finally slowed and stopped.

“Why are you...? oh,” Kara hid her face in Lena’s shoulder, her protests strangled as she realized that Lena had only moved away in order to tug her underwear down and off. She shivered, shaking at the touch of gentle fingers when they returned, parting her and slipping easily through a first wet exploration.

Lena chuckled. “So much for rule number two...”

Kara took a minute to catch on, squeaking indignantly when she did. “Who’s fault is that?” she demanded breathlessly, moving hesitantly at first, and then more surely against Lena’s stroking fingers.

“Oh, I take full responsibility,” Lena admitted, pressing deeper. “In fact... let’s see if we can get you to break rule number three too, hmm? Just how good does it need to be to make Supergirl swear?”

“Oh Rao,” Kara cried helplessly.

She surged up as Lena slid all the way inside her, forgetting her own pleasure in her need to give Kara what she needed. She felt even better than Lena had imagined, slick and tight, and beautiful around her fingers. Lena had been slightly worried that things might be... different, alien, and she’d been prepared for that, Lena Luthor was not one to be frightened away by a little variety. She’d only wanted to be sure she could still make everything work, but Kara was deliciously human, and Lena was relieved, if only because it meant there would be less of a learning curve. She did prefer to excel after all.

Judging by Kara’s reactions, she was doing just that, but there was more she wanted to try...

The skin of Kara’s stomach was smooth under her lips, with just the barest tang of salt and sun, but she could feel the power Kara was holding in check under that soft exterior, and she shivered at the thought of all the uses they could put that strength to once they got to know each other better in this new arena. Kara’s hands had found their way into her hair again, and Lena closed her eyes as her fingers tightened, a soft sound escaping the back of her throat when Kara pulled just hard enough to
make her remember the burn between her own legs. But first...

Never letting up with her fingers, Lena moved lower, dipping her tongue into Kara’s belly button, and pressing open-mouthed kisses between her hip bones.

It was almost enough.

Kara tipped her head back against the pillows, panting and gasping incomprehensible syllables in a lovely, liquid language that nevertheless, was not what Lena wanted to hear.

“That’s cheating,” Lena breathed against her skin.

“Best... you’re going... to get...” Kara rasped.

“We’ll see about that...” Lena pushed deeper with her fingers, picking up the pace a little as she finally got her lips and tongue where she wanted them, tasting the very essence of her beautiful superhero.

Kara might have sworn when she came. Lena would never know, because her thighs closed tightly around Lena’s ears as her back arched up of the bed, blocking out sound even as the smell and touch, and flavour of her blocked out everything else, until Lena was drowning in nothing but Kara.

Lena coaxed her through it, not letting up until Kara lay limp and languid on the bed, her breathing slowly steadying.

She dragged Lena up eventually, pulling her into a rough and messy kiss, making a little surprised sound at the taste of herself on Lena’s lips. “That...” she said shakily a moment later, carding her fingers through Lena’s hair once she’d collapsed with her head on Kara’s chest. “Was incredible. We need to do that like... every day. Maybe twice a day.”

Lena snorted. “Someone’s ambitious.”

“Excuse me?” Kara’s hands stilled. “Are you saying you don’t want to have sex with me every day?”

“Darling...” Lena propped herself up on her elbows, smiling at the smear of charcoal still smudged across Kara’s nose. “I would happily spend an entire week naked in this bed with you, but we do have a few prior commitments.”

Kara scoffed. “I’ll make time. This is... I didn’t know it could be like this. Did you? I mean... of course you knew... you’re amazing, but me-“

Lena stopped her with a kiss, licking into her mouth until Kara was whimpering again before pulling away. “This was new for me too,” she admitted roughly. “I’ve been with women before, but I’ve never been with someone I loved... and you’re right. It was incredible.” She kissed her again. “You were incredible.”

Kara grinned. “I love you too. So... a week, huh?”

Lena laughed. “How about a night? We still have a five or six hours. There are several things I’d like to do to you, and...” She rocked forward, sliding against Kara’s hip. “A few I wouldn’t mind for myself...”

“A night is good...” Kara breathed, taking Lena’s hips in her hands and urging her on. “Just tell me what to do...”
Chapter End Notes

Hope that lived up to expectations! :)  
I think I stayed in the Mature range... but please let me know if anyone thinks I need to bump it up to an Explicit rating.
The second time Kara woke up naked with Lena Luthor was less of a shock. It was still a little bit of a shock, because not only were they naked; this time she knew exactly why they were naked. They were on-purpose naked. Within seconds of opening her eyes Kara was burying her face in her pillow to hide her blush as memories of the how joined the who, what, where and why of the situation. She wasn’t embarrassed exactly, it was just... new. Exciting and wonderful of course, but new and a little overwhelming.

Behind her, Lena was just beginning to stir. Without any of Kara’s self-consciousness, she stretched, yawning, before snuggling closer to press sleepy kisses between Kara’s shoulder blades.

“Good morning...” she murmured against the back of her neck.

Kara made an inarticulate noise into the pillow, and Lena chuckled, smoothing a hand up Kara’s back. “On a scale from one to ten, how much are you freaking out right now?”

Kara shrugged.

“How...” Lena dropped another kiss on her shoulder. “Should I close my eyes so you can get up?” she asked teasingly.

Kara shook her head.

“Do you want to get up?”

Kara shook her head again, reaching back to take Lena’s wrist and drawing her arm around her waist.

Lena flattened her hand against Kara’s belly and pressed a kiss behind her ear. “Use your words, darling. What do you want?”

Kara could feel her cheeks getting even hotter, but she turned her face out of the pillow and put her
hand over Lena’s, urging her ever so slightly downwards. “I want you.”

“Good answer,” Lena breathed, sliding her hand between Kara’s legs and stroking her delicately.

Kara arched into the gentle touch and sighed, closing her eyes. Lena had explored and experimented with her thoroughly last night, and she was applying everything she’d learned now, winding Kara up slowly with just the barest swirl and sweep of her finger tips. It felt amazing, but it wasn’t quite enough. Kara squirmed, a sigh catching in the back of her throat.

“Would you like more?”

“Please...”

Lena took her hand away, catching Kara behind the knee before she could protest, and pushing her leg up and forward. Her fingers were slick against Kara’s skin, making her shudder as she drew them slowly and teasingly down her thigh before sliding into her from behind.

Kara gasped, clutching at her pillow. The new position came with new sensations, and Lena’s touch was alternately firm and sure and then light and teasing. She kept Kara off balance, varying speed and pressure, and refusing to give her any kind of rhythm.

“Lena...” Kara whined.

“Yes darling?”

“You...” Kara tried to push her hips back to get a little more of what she needed, but Lena was spooned up against her too tightly for her to move.

“You know what I want to hear,” Lena teased, circling her fingers before pressing deeper again.

“I’m not... Mmmm.... going to swear for you...”

“I can wait.” Lena curled her fingers and lowered her mouth to Kara’s shoulder, kissing and nibbling her way up her neck to that spot she’d found last night, just under her ear, sealing her lips against Kara’s skin and sucking gently.

Kara didn’t mean to do it. She didn’t. There was no rational thought involved, mostly because she didn’t have any left, but somehow, faster than the thoughts she didn’t have, thanks to a judicious use of super speed, they ended up flipped, Lena on her back and Kara straddling her with Lena’s fingers still buried between her legs. Lena pulled back reflexively, but Kara caught her wrist, rolling her hips experimentally.

Lena’s eyes widened and Kara stilled, unsure, her fingers loosening around Lena’s wrist. “Is this... okay?”

“Fuck yes,” Lena breathed, her free hand finding Kara’s waist and urging her to start moving again.

Kara blushed, but she was too far gone to let a little inexperience stop her now. Bracing her hands against her thighs she moved tentatively at first, speeding up as she got the hang of it. The slide and drag inside of her was indescribable, and watching Lena watch her... Kara shuddered, eventually closing her eyes and throwing her head back as stimulation became too much, and she slipped over the edge with a cry before riding Lena’s fingers to a slow shaky stop.

As soon as she stilled, Lena hooked a hand behind her neck and dragged her down, crashing their mouths together without a trace of her usual poise or expertise. She was trembling, her heart beating
a staccato rhythm, and her breathing harsh and fast. She bucked up against her, groaning when Kara caught her hips and held her still.

“Easy,” Kara murmured against her lips, gentling her hold when Lena nodded. Shifting the kiss into something a little less frantic, she dipped her hand between Lena’s thighs and stroked her softly. It didn’t take long, a few breaths at most, before she tensed, her grip tightening around Kara’s neck and her back bowing before she collapsed back into the pillows with a sigh.

“That,” she said once she’d caught her breath. “Really wasn’t fair.”

“If you wanted fair, you shouldn’t have married someone with super powers,” Kara quipped, sitting up with a smug grin. “Race you for the first shower!” She sped for the bathroom, leaving Lena cursing and the blankets fluttering in her wake.

*****

The library was busier than Lena had expected for a Monday afternoon, but the big colourful sign at the front desk, advertising Mama and Me Story time from 3pm to 5pm, explained the shortage of parking spaces and the crowd when she walked in.

She had nearly cancelled; her need to find the last piece of the talisman warring with her guilt about the pile of work remaining unfinished on her desk, but Jess had practically pushed her out the door at four, insisting that she was perfectly capable of forging Lena’s signature.

“You realize most bosses wouldn’t find that reassuring?”

“It’s a good thing you’re not most bosses then,” Jess said, handing Lena her purse and a cup of coffee. “Now, go! Before Ms. Danvers calls and I have to explain why you’re running late.”

Lena knew better than to argue. Jess had accepted the news of her upcoming promotion with her usual understated professionalism, but Lena could tell she was pleased, and since then the secretary had become even less subtle about bossing her around. Not that Lena minded. If this was going to work, she needed someone who respected her without being intimidated by her, so that they could be her, when Lena needed to be somewhere else.

Like today.

Lena followed the sound of laughter and animal noises through the new releases section, where an anxious looking man in clean, but ill-fitting clothes nearly knocked her over trying to escape the well meaning assistance of a bubbly librarian.

“Excuse me,” Lena said, stepping aside with a frown.

The man just kept going, shuffling awkwardly down the aisle like his shoes were too tight.

“I’m sorry about that, dear. Are you all right?” The librarian sounded genuinely concerned. “He’s been in every day this week, but he doesn’t seem to want any help. He hasn’t done any harm, but I can’t imagine what he’s looking for.”

“I can think of something...” Lena muttered under her breath.

“What’s that, dear?”

“Nothing,” Lena offered her a reassuring smile. “I’m fine, really. Thank you.”
She let the librarian go back to work, leaving New Releases behind for a big carpeted area in the middle of the Library, where a loose ring of disinterested parents stared down at their cell phones, and a circle of kids gathered around a woman in a bright patchwork skirt with an oversized book in her hands. There were a few parents sitting on the floor with them, though Lena was pretty sure Kara was the only one actively participating. She stifled a laugh at the sight of her wife enthusiastically barking, meowing, mooing and clucking along with the story teller and about two-dozen kids, while Lizzy bounced happily in her lap.

Lena took the opportunity to snap a few pictures with her phone, setting the best of them as her screensaver before joining them on the carpet in a lull between stories, glad she’d chosen pants over a skirt today.

“Mommy!” Lizzy reached for her as soon as Lena sat down.

“Traitor,” Kara muttered when Lena picked her up and she snuggled into the new lap without a backwards glance.

“I still love you,” Lena assured her, leaning over for a kiss.

“Mmm...” Kara met her halfway. “I’m glad someone does.”

The story teller began handing out little felt puppet props for the next story, and Lizzy bounced right out of Lena’s lap again, running up to the front with another little girl who took two puppets, one for her, and one for her little sister who couldn’t have been more than six months, still a little wobbly where she sat in her mother’s lap, though she reached out for the felt duckling when her big sister offered it to her, closing her little fingers around it with a grin.

Lizzy, watched them thoughtfully for a moment, her own puppet almost forgotten. She climbed back into Lena’s lap and pointed. “D’at?”

“That’s a baby,” Lena said, “and her big sister, like your Mama and Aunt Alex.”

“Izzy baby?”

“No, you’re not a baby...”


Kara blinked. “Um... is she asking what I think she’s asking?”

“I have no idea.”

Luckily the story teller chose that moment to start the story, and Lizzy was quickly distracted, leaving the question of babies and sisters for another day.

“Any sign of the talisman yet?” Lena asked quietly, relieved to change the subject.

Kara shook her head. “No, but we’ve been a little distracted,” she admitted. “The first story was about a tiger. I don’t think even I could have dragged her away.”

Lena chuckled. “And you’re not enjoying this at all...”

Kara shrugged, a sheepish grin tugging at the corner of her lips. “Maybe a little.”

“Well then I’m sorry to say that I may have spotted one of our bounty hunting friends sneaking around on my way in.”
“Of course,” Kara sighed. “The last piece couldn’t have been one of the easy ones.” She looked worried, and Lena didn’t blame her. No one had gotten hurt at the craft store, but only because Kara had moved the fight outside. There were a lot of civilians here, and half of them were kids.

“Do you want to call your sister?”

“Sshhh!” hissed one of the other parents.

“Maybe we should...” Kara indicated the back of the room with a tilt of her head, and Lena nodded. She put Lizzy down on the carpet, getting only a half-hearted grumble of protest as the story teller finished and collected the puppets, handing out paper animals instead, and one of the Librarians brought over several baskets of crayons. The kids all ran over to claim a spot at the low tables, and Lena and Kara picked their way carefully out of the circle to the wall where they could speak more freely.

“Alex is already standing by with a team,” Kara said. “But I don’t want to call her in until we’re sure.”

“Fair enough,” Lena agreed. “Do you think you could tell whether or not he’s an alien if I pointed him out to you?”

“Maybe? I can try. Where did you see him?”

“This way.” Lena took Kara’s hand and led her into the New Releases section, but the strange man had moved on. “General Fiction?” Lena suggested, looking across the lobby.

Kara hesitated. “I don’t want to leave Lizzy alone. Maybe we should come back with Alex...”

Just then the general quiet hum of the library was split by a familiar shriek of pure fury, followed almost instantly by a collective gasp of horror. Kara spun around, yanking her glasses off her face, and vanishing in a blur of motion too quick for Lena to follow as children screamed and adult voices rose in fear and anger. By the time Lena made it to the end of the aisle, people were fleeing for the exit, and she had to fight her way upstream towards the story circle.

She broke free to find an eerie calm in the center of the storm.

The story teller was standing on one side of the carpet, Lizzy clutched to her chest. Her cheerful grin had turned vicious and predatory, and she had an alien looking knife pressed to the toddler’s throat.

Kara, face bare, but still in her slacks and button-up, stood on the other. She was so still she might have been a statue, but Lena could see her rage in the tight curl of her fists.

“Let. Her. Go.” Kara’s voice was low and murderous, her eyes slowly flooding with red and frost lining the edges of her lips.

“I don’t think so...” The story teller took a step away, and Kara tried to follow, jerking back when she pressed the knife more firmly against Lizzy’s skin. “Ah, ah, ah... I have a delivery to make, and I’m not about to let you stop me, *Supergirl.*” The last was said with a sneer.

Lizzy’s arms were pinned to her sides, but she still struggled, kicking with her feet and squirming as best she could. One hand clawed at the arm holding her in place, the other had a tight grip on a pink crayon, blue fire flickering between her fingers.

“Lizzy, drop it!” Lena pleaded, wishing now that she’d asked Alex to finish those invulnerability
tests.

Lizzy shook her head, but the Story Teller turned at Lena’s cry, her grip on Lizzy shifting.

“And who’s – Arghh!” she yelled, her knife clattering to the floor when Lizzy used that little bit of extra room to duck her head and sink her teeth into her wrist.

As soon as the knife fell, Kara was a blur again.

Lena staggered back when Lizzy was pushed into her arms, nearly missing the millisecond in which the Story Teller tried to run before Kara caught her, slamming her into the floor and holding her there with a hand against her chest, eyes blazing.

“Kara don’t,” Lena whispered, knowing Kara could hear her, but afraid she wouldn’t listen. Lizzy was shaking and Lena held her close, shielding her from what Kara might do.

“She deserves it,” Kara growled, pressing a little harder until the Story Teller whimpered, scrabbling at Kara’s arm and gasping for air.

“I know,” Lena agreed. It wasn’t a question of deserve. Lena could have cheerfully watched this woman die, her conscience clear, just so long as it was anyone other than Kara doing the killing. She knew, objectively, that Kara had killed before, but not like this, not in cold blood.

Sirens wailed faintly in the distance, and Lena half turned at the squeak of a boot on a polished floor. Alex gave her a questioning look, gun at the ready, her team arrayed in a fan behind her, but Lena held up a hand, shaking her head. Alex holstered her weapon, silently joining Lena at the edge of the carpet, her eyes widened when she saw the situation, and Lena had to catch her arm to stop her from going to Kara.

“Let me,” she said.

Alex nodded, taking Lizzy and getting her to drop the crayon into one of Winn’s little black bags so that Lena could cross the carpet to Kara’s side, kneeling down beside her and laying a hand on her shoulder. Kara flinched, but she didn’t pull away.

“Lizzy is fine and so am I,” Lena told her softly. “She didn’t hurt us.”

“She tried,” Kara gritted out between clenched teeth.

“She failed. Please Kara, let Alex have her, and take us home.” Lena didn’t have to feign the slight waver in her voice. Seeing Lizzy in danger had shaken her badly, though not quite as badly as Kara apparently.

Red light flared around Kara’s eyes and Lena held her breath, clapping Kara’s shoulder hard enough to make her fingers ache. Twin beams of fire blazed, and Lena closed her eyes against the wave of heat, her stomach rolling when the Story Teller screamed, but when she opened them again, the only damage was two neat holes burned into the floor on either side of the woman’s head, a wisps of smoke curling up from each one. The Story Teller herself had fainted.

Kara rose smoothly to her feet, pulling Lena up with her. She turned and walked away from the woman on the floor as if she didn’t exist, taking Lizzy out of Alex’s arms with a quiet thank you. Alex waved her agents forward, hanging back for a word with her sister.

“Are you okay?”
“I’m fine.” Kara handed Lizzy to Lena as the wail of sirens drew closer. “Is Maggie going to need a statement, or can we go?”

“There were witnesses, so she’ll need something, but she can get it later. Get out of here.”

“Thanks, Alex.” Kara gave her sister a quick sideways hug before scooping Lena up and flying all three of them out of the building and up into the sky, faster than the human eye could follow.

*****

Lizzy recovered swiftly from her ordeal, mollified by the novelty of the flight home, chocolate chip pancakes for dinner and an evening of her favourite cartoons, snuggled securely between her moms, dog, tiger and shark arranged at her feet. If she noticed any extra attentiveness, she simply accepted it as her due.

Kara was trickier. She seemed all right on the surface, if a little subdued, but Lena suspected it was a front. They usually traded off on Lizzy’s bedtime routine, but tonight they did it together, neither of them willing to let her out of their sight. Kara hesitated before laying the drowsy toddler down in her crib, and Lena laid a hand on her arm.

“Let’s take her to bed with us,” she suggested.

“Yeah, okay.” Kara’s words were casual, but Lena wasn’t imagining her sigh of relief.

They tucked Lizzy in between them, curling around her with their hands linked over her back. Lizzy was asleep in seconds, but Lena and Kara laid awake, listening to her breathe.

“We could have lost her,” Kara whispered finally.

“But we didn’t,” Lena reminded her.

“I’ve lost so many people already.” Kara gulped, her fingers tightening around Lena’s.

Lena squeezed back. “I know.”

“I don’t think I could stand it if...” She sniffled, tears running down from the corners of her eyes.

“Shh...” Lena shifted closer, running her free hand through Kara’s loose curls and gently kissing the tears from her face. “You’re not going to lose anyone else.”

“But she knew who I was...”

“She’s in custody.”

“What if there are more of them?”

“Then the DEO will handle it. We found all the pieces of the talisman. This is their job now. There’s no reason for anyone to come after us. We’re safe.”

“Promise?”

Lena pressed a last gentle kiss to her forehead. “Promise,” she said, praying to any gods that might be listening, Alien or otherwise, that it wasn’t a lie.
"Wait for it..."

Chapter Summary

Kara and Lena play house, Lizzy explores her creative side and the whole family comes over for dinner.

Chapter Notes

I have no excuse for this.

Enjoy!

(Some NSFW scenes)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Lena’s promise lasted almost a week.

Within twenty-four hours of securing the last piece of the talisman, alien activity dropped back to normal in National City. If there were any bounty hunters left outside of the DEO’s holding cells, they were keeping their heads down. One day became two, then three... without so much as a friendly fight breaking out at the bar.

Kara didn’t trust it.

She was grateful for it, but she didn’t trust it.

Lena was less suspicious. Or maybe she was just too busy to be suspicious. Jess’ promotion was supposed to give her more time for her family, but the transition was a little rocky. While Jess was learning the ins and outs of her new position, Lena was breaking in a new secretary. The girl was bright and eager to please, but she was also inexperienced and unsure. She lacked Jess’ ability to anticipate, and Lena was struggling to be patient with her.

She also had very obvious crush on Lena, which annoyed Jess, amused Lena and confused Kara.

“She does know you’re married, right?” she asked after Molly had blushed her way out of Lena’s office the second day in a row.

“I think having my wife drop by for lunch let that particular cat out of the bag, yes,” Lena said, sitting down on the couch next to Kara and opening her salad. “Does it bother you?”

Kara shrugged, digging into her box of stir fry. “Not really.”

Lena tried to hide her sulk.

“Are you disappointed?” Kara asked, laughing.
“Why would I be disappointed?”

“You, are! You wanted me to be jealous!”

“Well... maybe a little.” Lena admitted. “I’m married to the most powerful woman in the world. Is it so wrong to hope for a little old fashioned flexing?”

Kara rolled her eyes, but she showed up the next day in the cape and the skirt and the boots, telling Lena to lock the door before bending her over her desk and fucking her senseless.

“Is this enough flexing for you?” She whispered into her ear, twisting her fingers and making Lena moan.

Lena returned the favour a few days later. Ambushing Kara at Catco, she dragged her into the private office Cat had left for her and pushed her down into her chair before dropping to her knees with a wicked grin.

“Lena!” Kara spluttered as Lena reached for her belt. “What are you doing?”

“I think that should be fairly obvious, don’t you?” Lena said, undoing the buckle and getting started on the buttons.

“But I’m at work,” Kara hissed.

“That’s slightly hypocritical of you, darling.” Lena didn’t rush as she drew the zipper down, enjoying the slow reveal of dark blue silk. Kara had been shopping. “I seem to recall a rather illicit visit to my office the other day...”

“That’s different! You – Oh...” Kara gasped as Lena pushed the hem of her sweater up and kissed the soft skin of her belly. “You’re the boss!”

Lena sat back to raise an eyebrow at her blushing bride. “And I’m sure having the cape on didn’t hurt either. How many times did you have to circle the building before you were brave enough to dive through my window in all your glory and screw me over my desk?”

Kara’s blush deepened and she mumbled something that might have been five.

“I thought so.” Lena smirked. “Now, do you really think James is going to fire you over a workplace booty call?”


“Oh please,” Lena scoffed. “We’ll call it research. Don’t you have an article on alien and human relations to finish?”

“I turned it in this morning.”

“A follow up then...” She shifted closer, sliding her hands down Kara’s thighs to her knees and back up again, lingering on the play of long, lean muscles. “An in-depth exclusive between National City’s hero and a member of their most prominent anti-alien family...”

“In-depth? Really?”

Lena smirked. “In a manner of speaking.” She hooked her fingers over the waistband of Kara’s pants and tugged gently. “Shall I proceed?”
Kara sighed, lifting her hips so Lena could pull them down. “If we get caught, I’m blaming you.”

Lean paused. “Won’t you be able to hear anyone coming?”

“If you think I can pay attention to anything else, while you’re doing... that... you’re seriously overestimating my powers.”

“Well, I’m flattered but also slightly worried... is being eaten out on your official list of weaknesses?”

Kara laughed helplessly, breath catching as Lena pressed a kiss to the inside of her thigh. “Only when you do it.”

“Hmmm... sweet talker,” Lena murmured against her skin, growling appreciatively when Kara tangled a hand in her hair and pulled her closer. She was so fucking in love with this side of Kara; bashful, but uninhibited, artlessly assertive without being pushy or demanding. Sex with her was easy and natural, and just so damn hot, in a way it had never been with anyone else.

James gave her an odd look when she left Kara’s office about thirty minutes later, slightly dishevelled, and swiping a thumb across her lower lip, but he forbore to comment. Lena gave him a self-satisfied smile and a smug little wave on her way out anyway. Gloatimg might have been in poor taste given the circumstances, but she was a Luthor after all and methods aside, making Supers scream was in her blood.

Something she spent the rest of the week proving. Over and over again. In bed, in the shower, on the couch, the kitchen counter, up against the front door... everywhere and anywhere they got the chance. Kara was both a willing victim and an unexpectedly adventurous adversary. She was just as likely to jump Lena as the other way around, and given that she could literally sweep her off her feet, they were fairly evenly matched.

Their only real constraint in that department was Lizzy, but neither of them considered that a problem. Their daughter came first, always. But children sleep, and visit their aunts and go for walks with their uncles. With the immediate crisis past, Lizzy’s extended family welcomed her with open arms, loving hearts and lessons in hand-to-hand combat (courtesy of Alex.) Kara was also doing her best to live up to her self-appointed title of the fun-mom, already making plans for Lizzy’s second birthday party, beginning her musical education with the best of Nsync, and taking her out and introducing her to all of the best snack and dessert places in the city.

Lena came home one day mid-week to find them in Kara’s studio, both giggling and covered in paint. Kara had cut down the legs of the second easel to make it child-sized, and repurposed an old T-shirt as a smock that covered Lizzy down to her red-spattered toes. Lena only caught a glimpse of what they were working on before Kara had zipped around behind her to cover her eyes.

“No peeking!”

“No peeking!” Lena tried to sound stern. “If you get paint on this shirt...”

“But it’s a surprise!” Kara kept one hand over her eyes and used the other to steer Lena around and back out of the studio. Lena submitted to the manhandling with a sigh.

“Does this mean I’m making dinner?”

“We could order in?” Kara suggested hopefully, releasing Lena once they were in the living room.

Lena turned around to give her a look of pure exasperation. “Again?”
Kara affected a pout, but her eyes were sparkling with mischief and there was a smear of blue paint across her chin, which ruined the effect somewhat.

Lena rolled her eyes. “Fine, but it’s my turn to pick the restaurant.”

“Deal!” Kara beamed. “Kiss?”

As if Lena could refuse... She did brace a hand against Kara’s chest before leaning in though. This was a very expensive shirt.

One kiss turned into three before Kara pulled back, humming appreciatively. “You got a little...” She wiped a bit of paint off of Lena’s cheek.

Lena gave her a little push. “Go on, get back to your surprise. I’ll call you when dinner gets here.”

Kara left with one last kiss on the tip of Lena’s nose, dancing back before she could retaliate. “You’re the best!” she called over her shoulder, closing the studio door firmly behind her.

Lena just shook her head and got out the takeout menus.

Later that night, with dinner eaten and the leftovers put away (Lena had learned that if she wanted leftovers for lunch the next day she had to take them out before unleashing her voracious family,) Kara sat Lena down on the couch and helped Lizzy carry a sheet-draped canvas out of the studio. Lizzy dragged it the last few feet herself and Lena took it from her when she got to the couch, lifting it up into her lap.

“Is this for me?” she asked.

Lizzy nodded, her little face serious. “‘Izzy ‘dis, f’Mommy.” She scrambled up onto the couch beside Lena, leaning into her side, and pulled the sheet off.

Lena bit her lip, swallowing against a lump in her throat. It wasn’t a picture of anything in particular; Lizzy might be bright, but she wasn’t even two. Still, every inch of the canvas had been lovingly painted in vibrant hues of blue and green, with a dash of red. There were deeper patches of navy and indigo, swirls of lime and stripes of jade edging into emerald and turquoise. The red was crimson and burgundy, a brushstroke here, and a swipe across a corner, there. At the bottom, Kara had clearly helped her with her initials, two shaky L’s side by side, and a smudge that might have been a D.

Without a word, Lena set the painting aside and gathered Lizzy into her lap, hugging her close and pressing a kiss to the top of her head. Blinking back treacherous tears, she looked up to meet Kara’s eyes across the room. Kara smiled and joined them on the couch, wrapping her arms around them both.

“Do you like it?” she asked.

“I love it. It’s beautiful, Lizzy. Thank you,” Lena added.

“Welcum,” Lizzy said matter-of-factly, enjoying the snuggling for a few minutes before she started to wiggle. “‘Izzy, down?”

Lena let her go, relaxing into Kara’s arms as the both watched her pull a bin of toy cars down off her shelves against the wall and start lining them up across the carpet. She masterminded a “crash,” and then swooped in to save the day, carefully carrying the “injured” cars to safety.

“Mommy, fix?” She asked Lena, holding up the little metal toys.
Kara laughed, pressing a kiss to Lena’s temple. “She knows who the engineer in the family is,” she teased. “Your turn to be a hero.”

Lena spent the rest of the evening playing a strange combination of doctor and mechanic, teaching Lizzy about oil changes, brakes and alignments, while the toddler nodded sagely, returning the recovered “Patients” to the bin and bringing over new ones. Kara watched them from the couch, a sketchbook open and largely untouched in her lap.

But the week wasn’t all sex, take out and family fun.

That first night after the library, even with Lizzy tucked safely in between them, neither Lena nor Kara took could sleep for more than an hour or so without waking up to check on her. They were both wrecks the next day, and Lena called Eliza no less than three times from her office to make sure Lizzy was okay. Kara confessed after work that she’d been listening in on both of them on and off all day, apologizing shamefacedly for the breach of privacy. Lena pulled her into a kiss and told her not to worry about it, though she reserved the right to ask her to stop at any point.

The second night, Kara woke up screaming.

Jolting upright, she wrenched herself out of Lena’s arms, scrambling away to huddle with her back pressed against the headboard, hands over her eyes and shoulders bowed, breath wheezing in and out of her lungs.

“Kara...?” Lena reached for her, but Kara flinched away, a flash of bright light winking between her fingers.

“Don’t, I…” She gulped. “I can’t- I don’t want to hurt you.”

Lena sat up slowly and carefully, heart pounding and the sick taste of adrenaline in the back of her throat, but she kept her voice calm. “Okay, I won’t come any closer, but I’m right here. Can you tell me what happened?”

“Everything was black,” Kara rasped. “Black and cold and quiet, and I was all alone...” She swallowed and dropped her hands to tangle in the sheets, eyes still shut tight. “I haven’t had that nightmare in a long time... not since the first year after I-”

“Fell to Earth?” Lena finished for her, and Kara nodded.

“I’m sorry,” She said, squinting and blinking a few times before opening her eyes all the way. “I’m fine now.”

“You’re not fine.” Lena edged a little closer. “May I touch you?”

“Please?” Kara melted into her arms, burying her face in the crook of Lena’s neck. She was still trembling, and her skin was cold and clammy. Lena held her as tightly as her fragile human strength would allow.

“Was it just a nightmare?” she asked gently.

Kara shook her head. “It’s a memory,” she admitted. “From my pod, after Krypton exploded.”

“How long were you up there?”

“Twenty-four years.”
“Kara...” Lena had no idea what else to say to that. She knew Kara had been young when she was adopted by the Danvers, and her heart ached at the thought of that little girl floating through space all alone for so long with nothing but the memories of a dead planet to comfort her. She didn’t wonder that Kara had resisted getting attached to their daughter. She was only grateful she’d been able to take the risk at all. She stroked a hand through Kara’s hair, brushing her lips against her temple. “You’re not alone anymore,” she whispered. “Not now, and not ever.”

Kara warmed under Lena’s touch, her shaking eased, and eventually they laid back down, trading soft, soothing kisses until Kara’s eyelids started to droop and she yawned, rolling over and pulling Lena’s arm around her. “Thank you,” she murmured. “For being here.”

Lena kissed the back of her neck, holding her close and breathing her in. “Always.”

“Do you think...” Kara hesitated, playing with Lena’s fingers, her touch lingering on the two silver rings she wore. “Would you, I mean... I was thinking, maybe we should get married?”

“Didn’t we already do that?” Lena said after a beat of silence, the teasing an automatic deflection even while her heart was suddenly beating double time.

Kara elbowed her. Gently. “For real, silly. Maybe on our fourth anniversary? We could tell everyone we were renewing our vows, and Lizzy would be old enough to be the flower girl, and there are some Kryptonian customs I’d like to add in if that’s okay with you. Lena?” she added when Lena didn’t respond right away. “Are you okay? We don’t have to...”

“I-” Lena took a deep breath and tried again. “I would love that. I would really, really love that.”

“Oh...” There was wonder in Kara’s voice, and she laced their fingers together, holding their clasped hands against her heart. “Good. Me too. So... are we engaged now? Or re-engaged, I mean?”

“I guess?” Lena could feel laughter bubbling up in her chest. It was ridiculous really, how quickly Kara could turn despair into delight. “Should we make an announcement?”

“Hmm...” Kara took a moment to think about it. “What about a dinner party?”

“Of course,” Lena agreed. “When?”

“Friday,” Kara decided. “We’ll invite everyone who knows.”

“I’ll call a caterer in the morning,” Lena offered. “Is there anything else?”

“No?”

“Kara...”

“I um... it’s something Alex and I talked about, and then Lizzy mentioned it at the Library and I wondered... do you want more kids?” she asked in a rush.

“Oh...” Lena had expected that was a conversation they would have sooner or later, but she’d kind of been hoping for later. It wasn’t that she didn’t like the idea as an idea, she did, it was just... “don’t you think that’s moving a little fast?”

“I don’t mean right now,” Kara clarified hastily. “But maybe someday? I’d like Lizzy to have a sister or a brother, like we did.”

“My brother went mad and tried to kill me,” Lena reminded her.
“I know, but before that he gave you a harpoon to fend off sharks in the bathtub.”

True enough, Lena had to admit, but she was still struggling to believe that Lizzy was really theirs. She was still braced for loss. The possibility of opening her heart to even the idea of more children seemed a foolish hope under the circumstances. “Can I think about it?”

“Of course!” Kara assured her. “Whenever you’re ready. I won’t say another word until then. But for now…” Kara pressed back against her, mood suddenly shifting to something a little more suggestive. “Since we’re up anyway…” she added, rolling over with an impish little grin. “Should we have our own celebration?”

“I don’t see why not.” Lena ran a hand down her side, pulling her closer. “Since we’re up.”

It wasn’t Kara’s only rough night that week, but it was the worst. After that the nightmares faded, until by Friday they were gone, and Kara was all sunshine and dimples again.

Which was a relief, because Lena knew how to host a Gala for five hundred, but she had no idea what to do with an intimate gathering of friends and family. The Luthors had been known for their dinner parties, but no one would have ever called them intimate. At least not with a straight face.

Kara seemed to sense Lena’s apprehension, and she stayed close until Lena started to relax, helped in no small part by Alex and Maggie, who seemed determined to make Lena comfortable. Eliza was also a serene, loving presence who didn’t so much try to get through Lena’s walls as simply embrace her, walls and all. J’onn was a little harder to read. He seemed happy enough to welcome her into their unusual little family, but Lena didn’t really know him, and he had walls of his own. Winn was everywhere, talking to everyone and rewiring their entertainment system in shameless revenge for Lena’s criticism of his set up at the DEO.

Talking to James was a little awkward, mostly because Lena couldn’t resist needling him, and he was clearly trying to be on his best behaviour, which took all the fun out of it. Lena steered Jess his way when she showed up, introducing them and escaping again before she could get pulled into the conversation.

“Playing matchmaker?” Kara asked, coming up behind her and wrapping an arm around Lena’s waist.

“Maybe?” Lena tugged her into a quick sideways kiss. “Where’s Lizzy?”

“Showing J’onn her room. I think she’s finally forgiven him for the cookie incident.”

Lena laughed. “The one where she tried to steal his cookies?”

“She has a unique sense of justice.”

“That’s one way of looking at it. Come help me in the kitchen?”

“Please tell me that’s a euphemism…”

“Unfortunately, no.” Lena pulled Kara along with her into the kitchen to refill the plates of appetizers, kicking her out again within minutes when more of the food ended up in her mouth than on the trays.

Winn came in to help her carry them out and put the boxes of extras away. “Aw…” he said, closing the fridge on the last of them and catching sight of the list stuck to the door. “You have family rules, that’s so cute! But why is this one crossed out?”
“Winn... you might not want to-”

“Wait,” he frowned at the list, ignoring Lena’s warning. “I think I can read it... No wet Superheroes in the... oh my god! How could you let me read that with my own eyes?”

Lena sighed. “I tried to stop you.”

“What are you yelling about, Schott?” Maggie demanded, leaning over the island.

Winn snagged the list off the fridge and handed it to her. “Look at rule number two. Three guesses as to why they crossed it out, and the first two don’t count.”

Maggie perused the list of rules quickly, cackling when she deciphered the second one. “Ooohh... but isn’t number three a problem too?” she asked, raising a brow at Lena who was trying to endure the teasing with some attempt at equanimity.

“Only for me,” she admitted dryly.

Winn hooted with laughter and Maggie snorted. “Kara!” she yelled across the room. “Get your butt over here!”

“What?” Kara looked confused until she saw the list on the counter in front of Maggie. “Oh, no...”

“Hell, yes.” Maggie grinned, tapping the third rule. “Explain. Supergirl is too good to swear now?”

Kara wrinkled her nose. “It’s crass...”

“And having sex at the office isn’t?”

Kara flushed, covering her face with her hands. “You heard about that?” she squeaked.

“Oh honey, everyone heard about that.”

“Excuse me, I’m just going to go die now...”

“Whose dying?” Alex joined them before Kara could make her escape. “What’s that?” she asked Maggie, but the detective quickly flipped the list over.

“Nothing you want to see, Danvers. There are some things a sister doesn’t need to know.”

Lena loved Maggie just a little bit for that. “It’s nothing,” she added quickly. “They’re just teasing Kara. Would you mind helping me with the wine?”

Alex was duly deflected, and if Winn and Maggie spent the rest of the evening snickering and taking turns trying to make Kara blush (it wasn’t difficult,) then at least she was spared that extra mortification. Lena would have been annoyed, but it was so good natured, that she found herself laughing along, and even Kara joined in eventually.

Everything was perfect until they gathered everyone together to make their announcement, and four phones started blaring out a warning all at once.

J’onn got to his first, but it was Alex who broke the news, her face white and fingers closing so tightly around her phone it was a wonder the screen didn’t crack.

“There’s been a break-out at the DEO...”
Chapter End Notes

Buckle in... the next few chapters are going to be a bit of a bumpy ride.
Maggie was the first one out the door, calling in the breach to the station and leaving with a kiss and a hasty “Stay safe,” for Alex.

J’onn barked orders over his phone, ordering a lock down of the containment level, but the damage was already done. Of the known bounty hunters, only one remained in custody; their grey-skinned informant.

“Let’s move out people. Winn, I want you checking the vaults and finding out what, if anything, they took with them. Alex, you’re in charge of questioning the able-bodied personnel. We need to know how over a dozen maximum security prisoners walked out of their cells without anyone noticing. Supergirl, can you patrol the city? Maybe we’ll get lucky and one of them will show themselves.”

Alex and Winn were gone before J’onn had finished giving the orders, but Kara hesitated.

“What about Lena and Lizzy?”

“What about them?”

“Who’s going to protect them if I’m out flying around the city?”

“With all due respect, there’s no reason to believe they’re in any danger. These bounty hunters were hired to find the talisman, not threaten your family. Our first priority has to be keeping that kind of power out of the wrong hands.”

“I can stay,” James offered. “I’ll call if there’s any trouble.” He tapped the watch around his wrist.

“I’ll stay too,” Eliza added.

“It’s not that I don’t appreciate it but...” Kara looked imploringly at Lena, unable to articulate the nebulous ball of dread currently lodging itself in her throat at the idea of leaving them.

Lena picked Lizzy up and met Kara’s eyes with a subtle nod. “What if we spend the night at the DEO?” she asked. “It’s the one place we know they’re not, and we’d be perfectly safe surrounded by all the highly trained people with guns without interfering with the search.”
“Fair enough,” J’onn agreed and Kara breathed a sigh of relief. “I can take you both there myself. Kara?”

Kara saluted. “Up, up and away.” She pulled Lena close for a quick hug and pressed a kiss to Lizzy’s forehead. “I’ll come get you as soon as I can.”

“We’ll be waiting.”

“Mama pow,” Lizzy added solemnly, offering her chubby little fist which Kara met in a gentle bump.

“That’s right, kiddo.”

Kara may or may not have shadowed J’onn’s SUV until they were all safely inside the DEO. It was the logical place to start her search either way.

And in the end finding the alien fugitives wasn’t the problem.

“We’ve got a sighting at M’gann’s bar.” Winn’s voice came over the comms.

“I’ve got one here too,” Kara said, doggedly pursuing the bat-like vespernam through the maze of downtown skyscrapers. “Any idea how they got out?”

“Not yet, but Alex has already made three people cry, so I’m thinking that could take a while.”

“And the talisman?”

“That’s the funny thing.” Winn sounded puzzled. “They didn’t even try to get into the vaults. All eight pieces are present and accounted for.”

Kara really wanted to be reassured by that. “Why would they leave it behind?”

“No honour amongst thieves?” Winn hazarded. “Maybe their loyalty to their employer doesn’t extend to a lifetime of imprisonment?”

“Maybe...” Something about it just didn’t sit right though.

“Oh, I’ve got a lead on another one down by the docks... Come on guys, you’re not even trying here.”

“Doesn’t that seem weird to you?” Kara ducked around another building, catching sight of the vespernam diving into the subway tunnels. Shrieks of fear and surprise heralded its arrival. “Darn it!” she spat, following it down. “I’ve got civilians here Winn.”

“There are reports of casualties at the bar too...” Winn sounded grave. “This is bad... stick with that one, I’m sending another team to help M’gann, oh shit.”

“Winn?” Kara landed on the platform amidst a scurry of fleeing travellers, and scanned the tunnel for any sign of the alien.

“The one at the docks is the Ballyrosh...”

“The walking mountain?”

“That’s the one. We’ve got more civilian casualties and some serious property damage going on.”

“Supergirl!” J’onn, in full martian man hunter regailia, swooped into the tunnel and landed next to
her. “I’ll take this one. You head to the docks. We’ll need your heat vision to disable the Ballyrosh.”

“What about the bar?”

“Alex and Guardian can handle it.”

Kara nodded and took off again, but by the time she got to the docks there was no sign of the alien, only the destruction he’d left behind. Half collapsed buildings and cranes torn out of the ground, ships dragged from the water and left lying on their sides. Shipping containers tossed around like a child’s building blocks, and cars and trucks simply smashed into scrap.

“Winn?”

“I know, I know, it just... vanished. I’m trying to track it down.”

“Supergirl? Supergirl!” the gathering crowd had noticed her arrival, and pleas for help quickly followed. There were people trapped under the rubble, inside the beached ships and ruined cars. Kara could hear their muffled cries and smell the bitter tang of blood and fear. Sirens wailed in the distance, but for some of the victims it would be too late by the time help arrived.

“I’m going to stay and help. Let me know when you find it.”

Winn muttered an affirmative, keys tapping in the background. Kara got to work, freeing the worst of the injured first and directing rescue workers to the ones who could wait. Thankfully there were far fewer of the former than the latter, and it wasn’t long before she could leave the rest to the human heroes.

“Any luck, Winn?”

“No, but Alex could use your help at the bar.”

“On my way.” Kara launched herself back into the sky and headed for the bar. She arrived to find that Alex and James had established a perimeter and gone in after the alien, but from the sound of things, it wasn’t going well. Smashing, crashing and an angry roar were followed by gunfire and James being unceremoniously tossed out the door like a ragdoll. Kara caught him and lowered him gently to the ground.

“I’m fine,” he groaned, clutching at his side. “They’ve got it cornered, but M’gann’s hurt.”

“Stay here,” Kara told him, shooting into the bar past Alex and M’gann and straight into the bounty hunter, an enormous, furry alien with sharp tusks and long, powerful arms. The force of her impact knocked both of them through the back wall and into the alleyway. Kara lost her grip as they landed, rolling clear. He grabbed the edge of her cape and yanked, flinging her back through the ragged hole and into the bar. She crashed into the pool table, breaking it in two with a sharp crack.

“Kara!” Alex rushed over but Kara brushed her aside, racing back out into the alleyway only to find it empty.

“What the heck, is going on here?!” she demanded, scanning the surrounding streets and buildings and finding nothing.

“I might be able to answer that,” M’gann said, limping out into the alleyway. She was back in human form and her left pant leg was soaked with blood, but she shook her head when Alex offered her a hand over the rubble. “Don’t worry about me, I’ll heal. You’ve got bigger problems. I was about to call you when that... thing crashed in here.”
“You found a translator?” Kara asked.

M’gann shook her head. “Not quite, but I was able to call in a favour through some of my more unusual clientele for a partial translation from an anonymous third party. The language is Zrfffian. It isn’t widely known because it’s not originally from this dimension.”

Kara frowned. “But that would mean...”

“Our so-called informant is from the fifth dimension,” Alex finished for her. “Damn it.

“There’s more,” M’gann added. “That phrase, Levande Begaren, it’s not bright wish. Levande translates more closely to light of life, or living.”

“Living wish...” Kara stomach sank. No, no, no... it couldn’t be? Could it?

“Winn?!” She demanded through the comms. “Do you have eyes on Lizzy? Winn? Answer me!”

There was nothing on the line but static.

*****

“Winn? Answer me!”

“Oh, dear... She sounds so worried, doesn’t she? Tsk, that’s no good for anyone’s morale, is it?” The grey man smiled, showing far too many teeth for anyone human. “Thalo, if you would?”

Lena flinched as a large four-armed reptile brought his fists down on the communications console, but she kept a steady grip on her gun and her daughter, pointing the first squarely at the grey man’s head, and holding Lizzy close to her chest. Winn had shoved the weapon at Lena when the alarms started blaring and giant metal shutters slammed down over the windows, right before this bastard’s goons had broken through the door into the command center and knocked him out. Another alien with purple skin and huge sweeping wings had tried to grab Lizzy, but the toddler had kicked him in what passed for his shins with surprising strength and run to her Mommy.

Lena risked a glance to where Winn lay in a heap under his desk. She could still see the faint rise and fall of his chest, so he wasn’t dead. Not yet.

“That’s better,” the grey man said. “Now we can have a proper... conversation. My name is Qwsp, and you have something I need.”

“Supergirl will come for us,” Lena warned him, mentally calculating how long it would take Kara to fly from the bar to the DEO, and hoping she could keep them both alive until then.

“Oh I’m sure she will,” he agreed, almost soothingly, if soothing could be synonymous with nauseating. “But do you see the flashing red lights up there? Those mean we’re in a lockdown. No one in, no one out. Not even your precious Kryptonian can get through those shields, and thanks to that convenient lead lining our paranoid friends of the DEO installed, she can’t see or hear us either.”

Fuck... Lena had no reason to think he was lying. Why trap them in here otherwise? “So you lured them all out on purpose. The escape was staged.”

“Of course, my dear.” He seemed pleased that she’d figured it out. “And not just the escape. The attacks around the city, the captures... all of it to bring everything I need in here, and to keep
everyone who can stop me out there. Even my own little performance as a backwater bounty hunter just trying to help was all part of the plan, though I must confess, some of that was just for fun. We are tricksters after all.

**Trickster? Was this the imp? Oh hell.**

“I’ll admit, a few of my employees got a little... enthusiastic with their roles.” He said, shaking a scolding finger at the eerily grinning eel from the craft store and the story teller from the Library lounging with a few other unfamiliar aliens in the broken doorway. Lena saw one that looked like a yeti, and another with spikes and pebbled skin.

“But what can you do?” Qwsp continued. “They’re bounty hunters not actors and you see it all turned out beautifully in the end. Here we are; just you, me, my well muscled employees and my precious little *Levande Begaren.*” His grin widened impossibly further as he leered at Lizzy.

“You’re not touching her!” Lena raised the gun a little higher. If it weren’t for his hoard of henchmen she’d have shot him already and been done with it. “I won’t let you.”

“Oh I don’t have to touch her,” the grey man assured her. “I have no interest in her physical form. What I need is less... material. Do you even know what she is?”

“She’s my daughter.”

“Yes, you would think that. Though I had thought you were a bit cleverer. She’s not a child. She never was. She’s a wish; nothing more, and nothing less than the power to do and be nearly anything in this or any other universe. Why she decided to trap herself in that limited form, I don’t know. She’s not my wish, or yours I dare say.”

“I don’t care,” Lena insisted, though inwardly she was reeling. The worst part was it made perfect sense. All of this; everything they’d been through, the altered memories and fake history, being forced together and dragged around the city, it had all been *Lizzy*: molding them into the perfect happy family, and yet, none of that changed anything. “Whatever she is, she’s mine. Do you hear me?!”

“*Izzy, Mommy’s!*” Lizzy agreed, wrapping her arms more tightly around Lena’s neck, and glaring at the little man over her shoulder. “Go ’way!”

Qwsp sighed. “All very theatrical, but ultimately useless, as is your weapon. Balgrr, if you wouldn’t mind?”

Lena gasped as a cat-sized alien that looked like a cross between a centipede and a snake shot across the floor and towards her feet, teeth bared. She lowered the gun reflexively, getting one and then two shots off that it dodged with lightning speed before leaping up to her arm and snatching the gun out of her hand. It delivered the weapon to the grey man like a dog, dropping it at his feet with a clatter.

“Thank you,” he said with every evidence of sincerity. “Now we can get started.” He beckoned to a dark furred alien bristling with thorns and it brought him a large grey case, setting it down between him and Lena. Qwsp opened the lid, taking out the little black bags Winn had designed to neutralize the pieces of the talisman and gesturing for the alien to take the case away again.

“What are you going to do?” Lena demanded. “Why would you give her to us, just to take her back?”

“Oh I didn’t grant the wish,” he said, drawing each of the mismatched objects free. “I don’t have that kind of power anymore. Not since the council banished me and trapped me inside that *trinket* for all
eternity. I have your Daxamite friend to thank for setting me free. He tried to use my prison against
that idiot Mxyzptlk and broke it. But as soon as I had recovered myself, I could feel her presence,
and I knew what I had to do. This talisman isn’t mine, but it will serve. I’ll use it to siphon off the
power of the wish and make it my own.”

“Like hell, you will!” Lena spat, clutching Lizzy closer and turning to make a run for it, but her path
was blocked by a giant pile of moving rocks that resolved itself into something vaguely humanoid as
it rose to what passed for its feet. The purple bird-man grabbed her when she stumbled back out of
the rock giant’s way, forcibly marching her back to face Qwsp. Lizzy shrieked, struggling to get free,
and throwing a punch at the bird-man’s face that earned a grunt of pain from him, and a mild tut-
tutting from the grey man.

“Control her,” he said mildly to Lena. “Or I’ll have her taken from you.”

“Shhh... sweetheart,” Lena coaxed, catching Lizzy’s fists in her hand. “We’re going to be okay, I
promise.” Lizzy scowled, clearly unconvinced, but she subsided with a huff.

Qwsp arranged the knife, the box of Macaroni and cheese, the stuffed zebra, the toy xylophone, the
small curling leaf, the book from the museum, the ball of yarn and the little pink crayon in a circle
about two feet across. When each one was in place he stepped back with a flourish, evidently
expecting something tremendous to happen, but nothing did. The objects simply sat there unmoving.
After a few seconds the Zebra fell over with a quiet thump, making everyone except Qwsp jump, but
it was still just a stuffed Zebra, only now it was laying on its side instead of standing up.

“Well...” he said crossly. “That was disappointing.”

*****

“Kara, stop! That’s not working!”

Kara ignored Alex’s plea, throwing herself against the shields again and again. The front of the DEO
was pulverized. The outer walls had been reduced to rubble and the doors were nothing but twisted
metal and broken glass, but the shields had been designed to withstand even a Kryptonian’s assault,
and she was no closer to getting in than she had been when she’d broken the sound barrier to get
here and found herself locked out and Lena and Lizzy locked in.

“Supergirl!” J’onn added his voice to Alex’s. “You’re hurting yourself!”

Was she? Kara hadn’t noticed, and she didn’t care. Swooping up and away from the wall, she
looped back to hit it with her heat vision. Nothing. Screaming in wordless frustration she dove down
to the street, snatched up a car and hurled it at the barrier.

“Supergirl, that’s enough!” J’onn shouted, shielding Alex from flying shrapnel. “Use your head!
No, not like that!” he added when Kara launched herself against the shields again.

It was no use. Kara fell to her knees outside the barrier, banging her fist one last time against the
dented metal, a broken sob tearing its way out of her throat.

“Kara...” Alex knelt down beside her.

“I have to save them Alex,” Kara croaked. “I can’t- I can’t lose them. Not like this. Not again.”

“You won’t,” Alex soothed, laying a hand on her shoulder and squeezing gently. “We’ll find a way,
but you can’t help them if you burn yourself out first.”
“I know.” Kara wiped a hand across her face, wincing at the smear of blood along with the tears and dirt. “J’onn,” she said, standing up. “Is there any other way in?”

J’onn shook his head. “Not that I know of. If we had a Gnaarn in the city maybe... they can teleport.”

“I’ll check with Maggie,” Alex said, pulling out her phone, but Kara stopped her with a hand on her wrist.

“We could teleport inside?” she asked carefully.

“Theoretically yes, but none of us... where are you going?”

“I need an open door!” Kara called back. She flew up into the sky, she was sure she remembered... yes, there! In the park down the street there was a stone archway. **Okay...** she took a deep breath, thought of Lena and Lizzy, all those times she’d been yanked around the city through doorways and windows and under bridges, remembered how it had felt and dove.

*****

Qwsp picked up the zebra and frowned at it. “Curious,” he said. “That should have worked. Oh well, we’ll try something else. Into the circle my dear!”

Lena tried to resist, but there were over a dozen of them and only one of her. The eel finally just picked her up and put her in the circle, his long claws dragging threateningly down her arm.

“Stay,” he hissed. “Or I’ll disembowel you and make the child watch.”

Lena believed him and if this was really going to happen, she’d be damned if she let Lizzy face it alone. She stopped fighting, but she levelled all of them with a cold, hard stare. “Every single one of you is going to die when my wife finds you,” she said flatly.

A few of them had the decency to look nervous, but the eel chuckled. “When the boss succeeds, he’ll have the power of a god. What is one little Kryptonian against that?”

“Enough aggrandizing,” Qwsp cut him off. “There!” he announced, setting the zebra in its place and stepping back.

Nothing happened.

“Hmmm... Maybe try it without the mother?”

“No!” Lena fought with everything she had this time, but they dragged Lizzy out of her arms and cast Lena back, throwing her to the floor. The bird-man put a clawed foot on her back when she tried to get up, holding her down.

“Mommy!” Lizzy bit and kicked and yelled, trying to get back to Lena. The story teller swore when she got a foot to the face, yanking her knife out of her belt and threatening the toddler with it.

“You can’t kick without **feet,**” she sneered, catching one of Lizzy’s ankles.

“**Don’t hurt her!**” Lena cried, feeling like she was going to be sick.

“Only a little cut...” The woman almost purred, raising the knife.

She never got to lower it.
“Mama!”

A blur of red and blue and gold shot through the broken doorway and snatched the woman up, hurling her into the wall. There was a flash of searing heat vision, and the weight on Lena’s back vanished. She scrambled to her feet and picked up a chair, smashing it into the back of the thorny bat who let go of Lizzy to turn on her with a snarl.

Lena brandished the chair, but the bat was gone before she could take another swing, taken out by another impossibly fast attack.

Kara was everywhere, knocking aliens off their feet, picking them up and throwing them, dodging counter attacks, and clearing the way for Lena to get to Lizzy, but Qwsp got there first, grabbing her by the wrist and dragging her back to his circle.

Lena reached for Lizzy’s other hand, just brushing her outstretched fingers before she was yanked away, the rock giant’s stubby fingers closing around her waist and lifting her up off the floor. He squeezed and she cried out.

“Lena!” Kara froze in mid air, looking frantically between her and Lizzy.

“Don’t!” Lena gasped, but it was too late. The eel took advantage of Kara’s moment of indecision and struck, wrapping her in his ever-expanding coils and holding her immobile.

“That’s enough little Super…” he hissed, rolling when she attempted to use her heat vision and deflecting the blast harmlessly against the wall.

“Well done,” Qwsp said, slightly breathlessly. He dropped a furious Lizzy in the middle of the circle and stepped back, brow furrowed in concentration.

But again there was no response from the eight pieces of the talisman.

“Bother,” he cursed. Lizzy stuck her tongue out at him. “Well then, this has been a slight wrinkle, but perhaps a useful one. Tell me Kryptonian,” he said to Kara. “Since you were clever enough to find a way in here, how do I put the talisman back together?”

“I wouldn’t tell you even if I did know,” Kara said, struggling against the eel’s grip.

“Not even to save half of your little family?” He asked, gesturing to the rock giant still holding Lena off the ground.

The hand around her tightened again, and Lena gritted her teeth refusing to scream even as her ribs creaked and she struggled to take a breath.

“Stop it!” Kara shouted.

Lena’s vision began to go dark around the edges. Desperate for air, she clawed at the hand around her chest, a pained whimper escaping her throat.

“No!” Lizzy’s outraged cry cut through the buzzing in Lena’s ears. “D’at ‘Izzy’s Mommy!”

The world tilted on its axis, spinning and twisting Lena around until she was falling, and then suddenly she could breathe again, just in time to hit the floor and roll away from the thunderous crash of the rock giant smashing against the wall in a shower of blue sparks. She pushed herself up, scrambling to her feet and backing away.
“Catch her!” Qwsp demanded.

The yeti tried, but a flash of orange, black and white shot past Lena with a roar, and it went down screaming under an extremely pissed off tiger.

Apoplectic, Qwsp made a grab for Lizzy, but a flock of ducks exploded out of the air in front of her and he staggered back under their assault.

Lizzy began to glow, blue light flickering in a halo around her and touching each of the eight points of the circle before spreading out in eight tongues of lightning across the floor.

A spectral shark leapt up from the furthest one, biting a chunk out of the eelish alien holding Kara before sinking back down in a cascade of blue that crested like a wave. The eel shrieked, twisting, and Kara broke free, arrowing down towards Lizzy, but the rock giant had regained its feet, and it caught the edge of her cape, yanking her back.

Lena shook off her shock, and stumbled over to Lizzy. She reached for her, only to pull her hand away swearing when the flickering halo around her burned her fingers. Lizzy looked up, but her eyes were nothing but glowing blue light.

“Get away from it! That power is mine!” Qwsp snarled, grabbing Lena’s arm and trying to drag her away. Lizzy’s gaze snapped to him and she raised a hand, blasting him back and away from Lena with a ball of blue lightning. He hit the wall with a sickening smack that made Lena shudder.

The rest of the aliens were scrambling to escape the translucent sharks that rose through the floor without warning, dive-bombing ducks crackling with energy, and bristling tigers, one real and the others blue and shimmering.

Only the rock giant seemed immune. It still had Kara by the cape, and it was doing its best to smash her into the wall, rumbling in fury when she managed to twist around and score a hit with her heat vision.

“Kara...” Lena clenched her hands into fists, a nameless fury rising within her. This was her family, and she was not going to lose them. A sudden band of heat seared across her palm, and Lena looked down to find a narrow blue sword in her hand.

Lizzy smiled up at her with a familiar grin under alien eyes. “Mommy pow,” she whispered.

Lena nodded.

She’d fenced in college, but this was something else entirely. She hadn’t been sure what, if anything, a sword, even a magical sword, could do against a giant made out of rubble, but to her surprise it was more than effective, slicing through the tough hide with ease. She could only reach up to its knees, but that was enough to get its attention.

The giant lumbered around, dragging Kara with it, and took a swipe at her. Lena took a deep breath and grabbed onto its hand, riding it up until she could jump to its shoulder, flip her sword around and bury it in the monster’s eye.

Kara caught her before she could fall this time, scooping her up and setting her gently on her feet while the giant crashed to the floor behind them.

“Are you okay?” she asked hurriedly. “That was amazing!”

“I’m fine,” Lena assured her. “Go! I don’t want any of these bastards getting away.”
Kara nodded and took off again, cape snapping behind her.

Most of the bounty hunters surrendered more or less immediately. The eel fought to the end, but Lizzy wrapped it in loops of shimmering light and Kara was able to freeze it again. Qwsp nearly escaped, crawling brokenly for the door, but the tiger pounced, pinning him to the floor and sitting on him until he stopped struggling.

Lena dropped her sword and it disappeared in a wisp of blue smoke.

Shark fins sank into the floor.

Ducks landed on desks and chairs, preening their feathers.

The blue glow faded from the room, curling in twisting tendrils back along the floor, one to each item in the circle where Lizzy stood. She closed her eyes, and sank to her knees, the last of the light winking out between her fingers before she sagged to the floor, as lifeless as the pieces of the talisman arrayed around her.
Letting Go

Chapter Summary

Lena and Kara make a choice.

Chapter Notes

Glad I could get this one up quickly after that last chapter! :)

Fair warning, there are a lot of emotions in this chapter. If you're sensitive to that kind of thing, you might not want to read it at work, or on public transit.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kara didn’t realize she’d been listening to Lizzy’s heartbeat until it stopped.

Her own stuttered in sympathy as she whirled around, faster than thought, faster than sound, but not fast enough to save her daughter. Not even fast enough to catch her as she crumpled and fell.

“No...” She whispered, feet rooted to the floor. It couldn’t be too late. It couldn’t. Not now, not after all of this.

“Lizzy?” Lena nearly tripped over the box of macaroni and stuffed zebra, kicking them aside and dropping to her knees to gather their little girl into her arms. “Kara?” She called frantically, “I don’t think she’s breathing...”

“Lena...” Kara tried, her voice breaking. “I—”

“No!” Lena cut her off. “She’s not gone! She can’t be! We should be doing CPR, rescue breathing... something!”

Kara didn’t have the heart to tell her it wouldn’t work. How do you breathe life into a wish? Even one shaped like a child? “Here,” she said fixing the group of chastened bounty hunters with a glare that promised them any attempt at escape would be painful and futile, and crossed to Lena’s side, kneeling down and holding out her arms, “give her to me.”

Lena passed her over, gently cradling her head until she was settled in Kara’s lap. Kara let out a slow breath, closed her eyes and listened. She could hear Lena’s heartbeat; too fast, and her own; too slow. Shock, Alex would call it. But in her arms there was no heartbeat, no breath, none of the usual sounds of life at all, but there was... something. She furrowed her brow.

Winn groaned, sitting up and clutching the side of his head. “Ugh... I feel like I got hit by a bus. What happened? Kara? When did you...? Wait, is that? Oh no... Is she?”

Kara nodded dumbly, opening her eyes. Whatever it was, she’d lost it again.
Lena choked on a short, dry sob, burying her face in Kara’s shoulder.

“Wait!” Winn said hurriedly, “Don’t... just let me...” He levered himself to his feet, rummaging through the broken mess of his desk. “Ah ha!” He brandished his small black box that looked like it had been cobbled together out of spare parts. “I hope this still works...” He limped over to them, fiddling with the dials and wires until the machine lit up with a beep. He passed it over Lizzy and the beeping intensified, lights flashing.

“What is that thing?” Lena asked, hope blooming.

“It reads fifth dimensional energy,” Winn explained. “And it’s still picking something up from her. These too...” he said, pointing the reader at the scattered pieces of the talisman.

“But what does that mean?” Kara demanded more sharply than she intended.

“Oh, sorry... I think she’s still alive? I mean... still here, anyway. Do magical constructs really need a heartbeat?”

“You know what she is?”

“I was in and out of it for a while there,” Winn admitted. “Not awake enough to you know, move or do anything useful, but I caught some of that classic villain monologue. She’s a wish, right? Pure fifth dimensional energy? If my readings are right, some of that energy is still in there.”

Lena exhaled shakily. “How do we wake her up?”

Winn shrugged helplessly. “I have no idea, but he might...” he suggested, pointing to Qwsp, still pinned under a rather smug looking tiger. “And also, where did the tiger come from?”

“Long story,” Kara said, standing up with Lizzy still safely cradled in her arms. “Can you let everyone in? We’re going to need some help.”

The sirens cut off mid-wail, and the metal shutters creaked and groaned, rubble and shattered glass raining through the broken windows as they rolled back and the first rays of early sunrise shone in through a haze of dust.

Winn yelped and jumped as a large chunk of concrete fell to the floor and shattered at his feet.

“Umm... what happened to the DEO?”

*****

It was a relief to let J’onn and Alex take charge once the doors were open and cleared of debris. J’onn eyed the ducks a little askance, but once he understood where they’d come from he let them be and ordered everyone else to leave them alone too. He had the bodies of the Ballyrosh and the tusked yeti taken down to the lab, and assigned two person teams to escort each of the surviving bounty hunters back to containment.

“And I want eyes on them at all times!” he added. “Human eyes. I don’t trust any of our security protocols right now.”

The tiger proved difficult to shift, hissing and taking a swipe at the agents sent for Qwsp. He surrendered only when he realized Lizzy was being taken away, abandoning the imp and insisting on
following Kara, Lena and Alex to the infirmary. He padded along beside Kara, raising his head every few steps to sniff at Lizzy and make sad little chirruping noises.

Lena filled Alex and Kara in on everything they’d missed as they got Lizzy settled in one of the beds, setting up Winn’s device to monitor her. The steady beep, beep, beep, and flashing light was reassuring, even if it was measuring energy flows instead of a heart rate. The tiger jumped up after her, making the bed creak and curling up at her feet like a giant house cat, its impossible rumbling purr oddly heartening.

“I don’t know what else to do for her,” Alex admitted. “I called Mom, and she’s on her way, but I don’t think this is a medical problem.” She rubbed her eyes, dark and sunken with exhaustion and worry. “I’m sorry, but unless Qwsp will talk, we’ll just have to wait and see.”

“Oh, he’ll talk.” Kara smoothed an errant curl back from Lizzy’s forehead. “I’ll make sure of that.” She detached her cape and drew it off her shoulders, laying it over Lizzy and tucking the edges in around her before turning to leave.

“Kara,” Lena said, catching her arm. “Be careful? I can’t— I don’t want to lose both of you.”

“You’re not losing either of us,” Kara promised her, pulling her in and ducking her head for a quick, desperate kiss.

Lena clung to her. “I love you,” she whispered fiercely.

“I love you too,” Kara murmured in return. “You’ll stay with them?” She asked Alex over Lena’s head.

“Of course.”

“Thank you.”

Qwsp didn’t seem surprised when she found him in his cell, perched on the edge of his cot. The two agents on duty at the door let her in with twin nods, locking the door behind her without a word.

“You’re here for answers I suppose?” The imp said, straightening the cuffs of his shirt fastidiously.

“By whatever means necessary,” Kara agreed, fists clenching and heat building up in the corners of her eyes.

“By whatever means necessary,” Kara agreed, fists clenching and heat building up in the corners of her eyes.

“Oh there’s no need to flex those kryptonian muscles at me, Supergirl.” He sniffed. “I know when I’m beaten and all things considered this is still better than being stuck inside a piece of gaudy jewellery for all eternity, so I’ll tell you whatever I know, though I dare say it won’t be of much use.”

Kara blinked. She hadn’t expected cooperation. She was still aching to hit something, her stomach twisting with suppressed rage.

“Dissapointed?” Qwsp asked cannily, something nasty in the twist of his lips. “Would you have enjoyed beating me into submission? My, my... how very heroic of you.”

“I don’t hurt people for fun,” Kara gritted out between clenched teeth. “That’s your thing, not mine.”

“Fun, no... but vengeance? Ah, yes. You blame me for all of this...” He waved a long fingered hand, the gesture somehow encompassing their entire situation. “And you’re nearly right, but this wish was none of my doing. I merely seized an opportunity. I am not the villain of this story.
“Then who is?” Kara demanded.

“You already know that.” Qwsp shook a finger at her. “Don’t ask questions you already have the answer to or I may begin to regret my generosity.”

“Mxyzptlk...” Kara muttered.

“Yes.” Qwsp crossed one leg over the other and folded his hands on his knee. “His fingerprints are all over this mess. But that’s not the answer you truly seek.”

Kara glared, his mocking tone doing nothing to quell her growing urge to throw him through a wall. But he was right, infuriating as he was. “How do I save her?”

“Solve the riddle.”

“What riddle?”

“The riddle of the eight random pieces of nothing particularly important, of course,” Qwsp answered simply.

Kara frowned. “How will assembling the talisman help?”

Qwsp sighed. “You’re not the brains of this operation are you? Where’s your better half? Holding the little one’s hand I suppose? You should have sent her down here instead.”

“Lena’s not getting anywhere near you,” Kara growled. “You’ve done enough to her already!”

“Tut tut, I could have killed her, you know. I considered it, but I do hate to waste such lovely things... an error of judgement in this case. If she’d been dead I might have won. However, that’s neither here, nor there. I’m stuck with you, so I’ll keep my words small and simple.”

Kara reminded herself that she needed him alive, and resisted the impulse to melt his face. “Please,” she managed, though she nearly choked on the word, “just tell me what to do.”

“Manners at last...” Qwsp shook his head in disbelief. “Perhaps you’re not completely hopeless. Look, wishes are one thing,” he held up his left hand, “and mortals are another.” He held up the right. “You can have unimaginable power, or a little girl, but not both at the same time, you see? They can’t occupy the same space. In order to stop me, she had to stop being her.”

“So how do we change her back again?”

“How do you put a Genie back in a bottle when the bottle’s broken?” Qwsp countered. “Done is done. At least for you or me, but for the one who sent her...” He shrugged. “Answer the riddle. Summon the sender and maybe there will be a way, though it might not be a way you’re willing to take.”

*****

“This is impossible!” Kara threw her pencil, and Lena watched it fly across the room to bury itself point-first in the wall.

“Try not to wreck any more of the building please,” Alex said dryly, not looking up from her own pad of paper.

Kara huffed and crossed the room to wrench the pencil out of the wall. She inspected the tip only to find it broken and collapsed back into her chair beside Lizzy’s bed with a groan. “What if he’s lying?
What if there is no riddle to solve?"

“Then we’ll try something else,” Lena interjected, crossing out a line and flipping to a new page.
“But it makes sense. Qwsp couldn’t get it to work either. There must be a trick to it.”

“A really good trick,” Winn agreed from the other bed, rubbing the lump on the side his head while he thought.

“Stop that!” Alex reached over and smacked his fingers with her pencil.

“Ow!” Winn stuck his wounded fingers in his mouth. “Tha urt!” he mumbled around them.

“It was supposed to.”

They’d been at this for hours and they were all exhausted. Lena had a migraine and from the way Alex kept rubbing at her eyes, she probably did too. Winn was concussed, but still gamely trying to help and Kara looked like she really wished this was a problem she could solve with a swift right hook. They’d chosen to work in the infirmary because they needed Winn’s brain, however rattled, and Lena wasn’t letting Lizzy out of her sight, but the chairs were torture and there were only two beds. Sooner or later they were going to have to relocate or take shifts, but no one wanted to admit this might not be something they could solve in a day.

The eight pieces of the talisman were laid out on Winn’s bed, over his legs. They would have put them on Lizzy’s but the tiger had claimed that one and no one wanted to try and move him. It was such an innocuous assortment of objects. Nothing unusual or special... nothing that gave them any clue about why those particular things had been chosen except that they were commonly found in the places they’d been hidden. They could just as easily have been completely random.

“Banishing him was so easy!” Kara grumbled, toying with her broken pencil. “Just trick him into saying his name backwards, and whoosh! He’s gone.”

“Didn’t he write it backwards?” Lena asked, the barest hint of an idea tickling the back of her brain. “That’s what Eliza said...”

Kara shrugged. “Does it matter?”

“Maybe...” Lena got up from her chair beside Kara and went to the end of Winn’s bed, studying the objects carefully with this new perspective. She reached for the box of macaroni and cheese, picking it up and placing it to the far left. Then came the xylophone, and the yarn, the zebra and the pink crayon. The next one was tricky, but it was the title that was important, not the object itself. The truth about Sharks joined the line, followed by the little curled leaf and the knife.

“Mxyzptlk,” she said, running a hand over the objects from left to right.

The resulting bang and flash of crackling blue light knocked her off her feet.

“Lena!” Kara caught her before she hit the floor, supporting her with an arm around her waist while the swirling cloud of smoke slowly resolved itself into a man, or an imp Lena supposed, though he looked more human than Qwsp.

There was a glint of silver on the covers where the pieces of the talisman had been, Winn picked it up and tossed it to Kara who quickly closed her hand around it.

The imp coughed, clearing his throat and brushing blue dust off his jacket. He was shorter than Lena had expected, with dark, carelessly styled hair and a pinstriped suit over a purple T-shirt. Handsome,
if you went for that boyishly charming sort of look.

“Kara Zor-El...” he said with an unironically impish grin, ignoring Lena completely, “did you miss me?”

*****

Kara made sure Lena was steady on her feet before stepping around her to grab Mxyzptlk by his shirt, lifting him up and slamming him into the wall. The plaster cracked, and the little silver chain wrapped around her fingers burned.

“I’ll take that as a no,” he said with a wince. “Was it something I said?”

“You...!” Kara fumed, literally unable to articulate just how unbelievable angry she was. “How could — You know what? I don’t even want to know why you did any of this. I kind of just want to hit you until it stops being fun.”

“Ah...” He hedged, glancing around the room and not finding any sympathy there. “I’ve missed something.”

“You will be missing something—”

“Kara,” Lena cut in. “Maybe he doesn’t know?”

“How could he not know?”

“This may seem self serving,” Mxy said. “But could we maybe discuss this with everyone’s feet on the floor? You’re truly lovely when you’re angry my dear, but it’s difficult to appreciate you when I’m in this much pain.”


“Okay. Would anyone mind filling me in on what it is I’m supposed to have done?” He asked, straightening his shirt.

Alex caught Kara’s wrist before she could punch him. “You granted a wish,” she said. “And that wish turned into a little girl who can rearrange reality. These two,” she pointed to Lena and Kara, “became her parents, and apparently they’ve been married for three years. Last night the kid went nuclear on one of your cousins and his minions, and now she’s stuck as an incorporeal ball of infinite energy, and we don’t know how to get her back.”

“Oh... That.”

“Yes, that!” Kara snapped, throwing her hands up. “Has it ever occurred to you to ask someone before just randomly granting their wishes?

“It has actually, but in this case it didn’t exactly come up...”

“Why?” Kara demanded, crossing her arms over her chest. “Because you’re some kind of all-knowing, all-powerful imp-man?”

“No, because it wasn’t your wish I was granting,” Mxyztplk shot back with some asperity. “It was mine.”

That caught Kara off guard. “What?”
Mxy shuffled his feet, hands in his pockets. “I wished for your happiness,” he admitted sheepishly. “You’d won and I was being pulled back to my dimension, but that Daxamite oaf was only going to make you miserable, so... I cheated a little. Names have power,” he said indicating the chain in her hand.

Kara really looked at it for the first time. It was a bracelet with eight charms, one for each letter, cast in silver kryptonian characters. Mxyzptlk’s talisman.

“I’d forgotten that our wishes tend to have a mind of their own, it’s been so long since one of us actually made one instead of tricking you lot into it. I only meant to help...” he added.

“Oh...” the anger left Kara in a rush and she wobbled slightly as she stepped back, arms falling to her sides.

Lena was there to steady her, taking her hand and clasping it tightly between them. “Can you help us now?” she asked Mxy. “We don’t need wishes or infinite power, we just want our daughter back.”

“May I?” he gestured to the bed behind them, and Lena tugged Kara aside to let him pass. The tiger snarled at him as he approached, fur bristling along its spine. “Now that’s just rude.” Mxy snapped his fingers. The snarl became a squeak, and an orange tabby cat fell to the bed where the tiger had been a moment before. “Much better,” he said, making a shooing motion. The cat leapt to the other bed, turning to hiss at him from behind the dubious safety of Winn’s knees.

Mxyzptlk held a glowing hand out over Lizzy, eyes closed. Everyone held their breath, Lena’s hand tightening over Kara’s in a grip that would have been painful for anyone else.

“I’m sorry,” Mxy said after a few minutes, dropping his hand. “She’s still in there, but what she did... As a wish her abilities would have been nearly infinite, but when she took a mortal form she limited herself and your bodies simply aren’t built to withstand that kind of power. She’s trying to hold herself together, but she’s fading quickly.”

“So help her!” Lena pleaded.

“I can’t. I wish I could, but I can’t undo what’s already been done.”

“You can’t put a genie back in a broken bottle...” Kara added tonelessly. She felt numb; heavy, like she was about to buckle under an impossible burden, but also so weightless she might float away.

“Exactly,” Mxy said.

“Can’t you just make her a new body?” Alex asked.

“It’s more complicated than that,” Mxy said. “The Fifth Dimension is more energy than mass. Sometimes, when one of us makes a wish, a selfless wish, that energy becomes something else, something more...” He hesitated, running a hand through his hair. “It’s how we’re born,” he continued finally. “Her name in my world would be L, Z, Y, or Lzy.”

“Non-binary reproduction...” Winn breathed. “That’s so cool.”

Mxy ignored him. “The Lizzy you know is more than one of your children, but less than one of ours. She’s a true mix of both of our dimensions and I can’t just make her a new form, drop her into it and have her still be her. The best I can do is take her back to the fifth dimension to become what she was meant to become, and in a few hundred years or so she could return. Thanks to the yellow sun on this planet, you would likely still be alive, Kara Zor El, though you may not remember her.
“If I take her out of this dimension, all that she wrought will come undone. You’ll go back to reality as you knew it, and it will be as if none of this ever happened.”

“And that’s the only way?”

Mxy nodded. “She can either die as your daughter, or live as mine.”

“But she would live, if you took her?” Lena asked, eyes dry though there was a terrible hollowness to her voice and there was no strength left in her grip on Kara’s hand.

“She would lose the mortal part of herself and she would be changed, as all children are when they grow up, but yes, she would live.”

Lena took a deep breath and nodded. “Do that then.”

“Kara?” Mxy asked.

Kara felt like it was literally tearing her in two to agree, but she didn’t see any other way. Lizzy’s life mattered far more than the happiness the three of them had found with each other. “Do it,” she said. “But can we say goodbye first? Will she hear us?”

“She’ll hear you.”

“Let me and Winn go first,” Alex offered. “That way you can be alone...”

“Thank you,” Lena said.

Alex laid a hand on Lizzy’s head. “Take care of yourself, kid. You’re going to make one hell of an Imp.”

She helped Winn limp over and he curled her little fingers into a fist, bumping it with his own. “I’ll miss you, you little terror. Don’t be afraid to bite anyone who tries to mess with you.”

“Come on.” Alex tugged him away, beckoning to Mxyzptlk as well. “You too. They’ll call you when they’re ready.”

When the three of them were gone, Kara and Lena lay down to either side of Lizzy, linking their hands across her belly. They stayed just like that for a few minutes, neither one of them willing to admit that this was really goodbye, not just to Lizzy, but to the life they’d all built together.

“Don’t be scared sweetheart,” Lena said finally. “We have to stay here, but your dad will take care of you, and the fifth dimension will have cookies, and tigers, and spears, and so many new things to see and learn. I wish I could see you all grown up, you’re going to be so amazing, but—” her voice broke, and she clutched at Kara’s hand, blinking back tears.

“I’ll be here when you get back,” Kara finished for her. “I might not remember you, but you remember for us okay? And then you can tell me all about it and I’ll tell you about your Mommy and all the great things she did while you were gone.” She swallowed hard against a lump in her throat. “We love you kiddo.”

Kara pushed herself up and stretched over Lizzy to press a kiss to Lena’s forehead. “You stay here,” she whispered. “I’ll get Mxyzptlk.”

Lena nodded, and Kara untangled her hand and went to find the imp. He followed her back wordlessly, the gravity of the situation dampening even his usual mirth. She helped Lena up, pulling
her back against her chest and wrapping her arms around her. She set her own grief aside. It would be waiting for her later, but for now, in this moment, she would be strong for her family.

“Do it,” she said.

Mxy extended both hands over the bed this time and the fire that licked along his fingers was darker than Lizzy’s, a deeper, royal blue that moved in thick curling ripples instead of her mischievous quicksilver flickering. Kara couldn’t see what he was doing, but the hairs on the back of her neck stood up and she could feel the energy shift in the room. Something was drawing, pulling away and leaving a gaping hole behind. It stretched almost to the breaking point and then there was a vicious crackling and sparks of bright blue lightning snapped at Mxy’s fingers and he jumped back with a shout, shaking his hands.

Lena shifted in Kara’s arms. “What happened?”

“She won’t go,” Mxy said, inspecting his fingertips. The skin looked slightly charred. “Her refusal was rather... violent.”

Kara couldn’t help it, she laughed; a gallows chuckle. “That sounds like our Lizzy.”

“Oh hell...” Lena leaned back into Kara’s chest. “What happens, if she dies here? Would we remember her then? Would everything stay the same?”

“Since she wouldn’t technically leave the dimension, yes?” Mxy looked extremely confused. “Why does that matter?”

“Because dying is okay, so long as people remember you...” Lena said softly. “This is our fault. We tried to teach her about death, and instead we’ve created a martyr.”

“Not a martyr,” Kara corrected her, “a bright and loving little girl who wants her moms to remember her and be happy. How long do we have to convince her to go with you?”

Mxy shrugged. “A few hours? Maybe more.”

“Lena, can you stay with her? I’ll be right back, I just want to check on something.”

Lena nodded, stepping out of Kara’s arms and sitting down on the bed to take Lizzy’s hand. The tabby cat crept out of his hiding place under the sheets on Winn’s bed and leapt back over, rubbing his head against Lena’s hip and starting up a rumbling purr. Lena stroked him absently, and Kara cocked her head at Mxy, silently asking him to come with her.

“What aren’t you telling us?” She asked once the door was closed behind them and they’d gone a little ways up the corridor. “Qwsp implied there was something else you could do for Lizzy, something I wouldn’t like, but if the alternative is watching her die I’m willing to try anything. What is it?”

Mxy eyed her shrewdly, but didn’t deny it. “You won’t do it.”

“Tell me anyway.”

“She can’t survive as a wish trapped in a broken mortal body and apparently she doesn’t want to live as an imp, so to save her I’d have to make her into something new, but that would take real power, creation level power.”

“And you can’t create life...”
“No,” Mxy admitted, “but I *can* move it around. If I were to take a life from someone else, I could use it to heal her and make her *truly* mortal. She’d still have some of my powers, and probably some of yours, but she wouldn’t be a wish anymore, or an imp.”

That was... about as awful as Kara had expected. She thought fleetingly of sneaking Mxy down into containment. Surely there were beings down there who didn’t deserve the life they’d been given? But how could she ask her daughter to live with the shadow of death over her?


Chapter End Notes

Some chapter notes:

Qwsp is a cannon DC character, as is Mxyzptlk of course, but I made up a lot of the other fifth dimensional stuff. I didn't find anything in my research that directly countered what I wrote here, but if you're looking for in-depth comic accuracy, I'm sorry. I took artistic license.
Winning the War

Chapter Summary

Kara makes a sacrifice, Lena gets a surprise, and Lizzy tells her story

Chapter Notes

Next to last chapter guys! :D

This has some feels, but I don't think it's as bad as the last one...

Enjoy! - for real this time ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mxy refused of course, turning to walk away with a curt “no.”
Kara wasn’t taking that for an answer, catching his arm and hauling him back. “Why not?”
He shrugged her off. “You know why not.”

Kara held up the little silver chain, letting the talisman spin and catch the artificial gleam from the fluorescent lights in the hallway. “I could make you...”

“You wouldn’t.”

“No?” Kara asked. “Are you sure about that? Because I’m not. I can’t lose another family, not like this. Not when I can stop it.”

“Why do you have to be so...” He threw his hands in the air.

“Heroic?”

“Stupid!”

Kara bristled. “It’s not stupid to die for something I believe in.”

“It is when you don’t have to.”

“You’d rather I let you murder someone else instead?”

“Yes, actually. Shall I go pick someone out for you?” He raised a hand to snap, and Kara punched him.

“Ow!” He clutched his nose. “Enough with the hitting already! Are those your only two solutions? Hitting and dying? Because let me tell you, they lack imagination.”

“Whatever works,” Kara said, cracking her knuckles.
Mxy eyed her warily. “You’re not going to let this go, are you?”

“What do you think?”

“I think you’re bluffing. You’re not the kind of person who would force someone to kill the woman they love.”

Kara let her hands fall to her sides, the anger draining out of her in a rush. She didn’t want to feel sorry for him, but Mxy, for all his bluster and shenanigans, was also painfully sincere, and he was so clearly miserable about the entire situation. She didn’t have the heart to browbeat him anymore.

“Look,” she said, dragging him back to the door. Through the glass they could see that Lena had finally given in to her exhaustion and fallen asleep, curled up on the bed with Lizzy tucked safely into the curve of her body.

“That’s the woman I love.” She said. “You don’t know her, but she’s amazing, and brilliant, and kind and wonderful, and her family has been walking out on her since the day she was born. My life has been hard, but it’s been full of love. Hers has been only loneliness and betrayal, and you know what the worst part is? She thinks she deserves it.” Kara shook her head. “I promised her I would die before I let Lizzy go, and I meant it. I won’t be the reason she loses someone else.”

“But she’ll lose you,” Mxy pointed out. “Aren’t you just as precious to her as that child?”

“It’s not the same,” Kara said firmly. “Losing a kid... it’s different. She needs Lizzy more than she needs me. If giving up my life can give them a chance for a future together? I have to do it. And Lizzy? She had to know what was going to happen when she took on Qwsp and his goons. She sacrificed herself for us, and she’s still doing it. She’s a child, whatever dimension she’s from and she’s willing to die just so that we’ll remember that we loved her and keep on loving each other. She deserves a chance at a real life.”

“And this isn’t just a little bit because you’re afraid to live with the loss of another family?” Mxy asked shrewdly.

Kara blew out a breath and leaned back against the wall, letting it take a little of her weight. She was so very, very tired. “Of course I’m afraid,” she admitted. “Haven’t I lost enough? But please Mxy,” she begged, looking up at him through a sheen of tears. “If you really do love me, please don’t make me go through that again. Just... please, help me save my family?”

Lena stirred, murmuring sleepily when Kara climbed onto the bed behind her. “Kara?”

“Shh...” Kara soothed her, brushing a kiss across her temple. “It’s okay. Go back to sleep. Everything is going to be all right now.” She curled up against her back, arm around her waist and face tucked into the crook of her neck. Just this one time, this last time, she was going to be the big spoon.

“Mmm...” Lena subsided with a contented hum, drifting off again as soon as Kara was settled.

“You’re sure about this?” Mxyzptlk asked one more time. “You don’t want to say goodbye to anyone?”

Kara shook her head, taking a deep breath of Lena’s signature mix of flowers and spices. “I’ve left a note for Alex, but I can’t tell them. They’ll only try to stop me.”

“Really? Because I could tell them for you...”
“Mxy...”

“A joke,” he said. “I’m sorry. Are you ready?”

No.

“Yes,” she whispered, stretching out to press a hand to the still, quiet arch of Lizzy’s chest. Soon there would be a heartbeat there. A real one. “Do it now.”

She held them both close, her wife and her daughter, closing her eyes as Mxy’s fingers brushed the top of her head.

“Goodbye, Kara Zor-El,” he said, and everything went white.

*****

When Kara opened her eyes everything was still white.

Looking down, she was relieved to see that she was still more or less herself, though her super suit had been replaced by a simple blue dress, and her feet were bare. In her hands she was cradling a little ball of glowing golden light.

She looked up again and saw a smudge of colour on the horizon, a swirl of blue and green with a merry little streak of other colours running through it.

She knew immediately, without knowing exactly how she knew, that this was where she needed to go.

She took a step, and the ground under her feet was white too, but every stride brought her closer, until she could see that the green wasn’t just green. It was shrubs and plants, and grass spreading stubbornly into the nothingness until it faded away. The blue was a shifting patch of sky, and birds that winked in and out of sight as they flew through it. The other colours resolved themselves into a pair of socks and shoes, lying abandoned in the grass, a backpack and a pile of books and a little wooden logic puzzle... there was more, but Kara’s attention was caught by a low table and a little girl sitting behind it with a brightly striped tiger and a huge fluffy white dog sleeping at her back.

She was drawing a picture, bent over the page with her dark curly hair falling into her face, and the tip of her tongue caught between her teeth. She looked like she was about five or six years old, her features still soft and round, but with a hint of the sharp angles and stubborn chin she would eventually grow into.

“What are you drawing?” Kara asked, sitting down across from her, the ball of light held safely in her lap.

“My family,” Lizzy said, not looking up. “Are you here to try to make me go away again?”

“No,” Kara said. “I’m here to give you something.”

Lizzy shook her head. “Don’t want it.”

“Why not?”

“Because it’s not mine.”

“It could be.”
“No.” Lizzy finally looked up, her blue eyes glowing faintly and her expression mutinous. “You need it.”

“Lena needs you,” Kara argued. “I know you were supposed to be my wish, but—”

“Not yours,” Lizzy corrected her.

“Mxyzptlk’s then...”

Lizzy frowned, her nose crinkling in subtle disdain. “Not his either.”

“I don’t understand, he said...”

“He made me,” Lizzy explained, taking a new piece of paper from the stack beside her and starting another picture. “But I wasn’t for him. He sent me to you, but you didn’t want me either.”

“Of course I wanted you...” Kara subsided when Lizzy rolled her eyes.

“You wanted me later, but you didn’t want me yet. I came, and you were sleeping in bed with him.” This time there was nothing subtle about her expression of distaste. “I asked you what you wanted, to make you happy, but you said there were people who needed to be happy more than you, so I said who, and you told me about Mommy. You said she was really sad. You had lots of people but she had nobody at all. Make her happy, you said.”

“I don’t remember any of this,” Kara said disbelievingly though she had to admit, it sounded like her.

“Of course not.” Lizzy was matter of fact. She drew a circle and then another circle underneath it, adding long lines stretching out across the page. “You were asleep.”

“Oh. That makes sense.” Did it? Kara had no idea. None of this made any sense, but here she was.

“What did Lena wish for?” she asked. “When you asked her?”

“A new family,” Lizzy said. “You and me. I didn’t think I was a me then, but Mommy said I was. She said I could stay a wish if I wanted to, but she’d take care of me if I wanted to be part of her family instead. She said you would too, because you take care of everybody.”

So Lena really had wished for her...for her and for Lizzy. Kara pulled her knees up under her chin and wrapped her arms tightly around her legs as if that might dispel the ache in her chest. It would be Lena who when faced with infinite possibilities asked only for someone to love her, and then offered that love freely in return to a lonely child who didn’t even know it was a child yet.

Mxy might have made her for Kara, but Lizzy was right, she was Lena’s wish, not theirs.

“Is Mommy still sad?” Lizzy asked after a few minutes, looking up from her drawing again.

“She misses you,” Kara said truthfully. “She wants you to be safe and to live.”

The crayon faltered. “I don’t want her to forget me.”

“I know. She doesn’t want to forget you either. She loves you very much. We both do.”

Lizzy sniffed. “You won’t love me if you forget me.”

“Hey,” Kara unwrapped her arms from around her legs, reaching across the low table to cup Lizzy’s face in her hands and leaving the golden light in her lap. She wiped away a single tear with the pad of her thumb. “We will always love you, memories or no memories. But I’m not asking you to go.
I’m asking you to live. Live for your Mommy, and for yourself. Be happy. Together.”

Lizzy sniffled again, a second tear joining the first. “But then you’ll die. I don’t want you to die!”

“Dying isn’t bad,” Kara reminded her, “and if you and your Mommy remember me, then I’ll never really be gone, right?”

Lizzy bit her lip, looking so much like a tiny Lena in that moment that it nearly broke Kara’s heart. “Mommy needs me?” She asked, her voice quavering.

“Yeah, kiddo.” Kara dropped her hands, picking up the glowing ball and holding it out. “Can you take care of her for me?”

Lizzy nodded, reaching out her hands for the light, and Kara laid it gently in her palms, feeling the wrench somewhere deep inside her as Lizzy closed her fingers around its golden glow. The little pocket of reality around them began to disintegrate almost immediately, colours running and fading into nothing. The table melted away and the sleeping dog and tiger unravelled into black, white and orange ribbons waving in the breeze.

Lizzy threw herself into Kara’s lap, wrapping her arms around her neck. “I love you Mama,” She cried, already disappearing even as Kara tried to hold her tight. “I’ll remember you!”

“Goodbye,” Kara whispered as the nothingness swallowed everything up, including her.

*****

Lena woke up with a start, knowing immediately that she’d slept too long.

She’d drifted off to the reassuringly steady beep, beep, beep and flashing light of Winn’s machine, trusting that Kara would wake her before it was too late, but now the small black box was dark and silent.

Lizzy was gone.

“Fuck, no.” Lena gathered the little body to her chest, bowing her head over dark curls. “Don’t leave me, please...” Her eyes burned without tears, and there was a hollow feeling in her chest where grief should have been. She was numb, empty, and that terrified her.

And then Lizzy took a breath, exhaling against Lena’s throat and squirming against the tight grip of her arms.

“Lizzy?” Lena loosened her hold, pressing a hand to Lizzy’s chest where a steady thump, thump was beating like a reprieve. Lizzy yawned, scrunching her nose up and stretching before rubbing her eyes and blinking up at Lena.

“Mommy...” she said with a sleep smile, “br’fast?”

Lena laughed, sitting up and pulling her into another hug, startling an oof from Lizzy, not caring that she was laughing through a haze of tears. “Oh, sweetheart. Yes, ee can have breakfast. Let’s wake up your Mama, she’s going to be so happy to see you!”

Lizzy wriggled free, clambering over Lena’s lap to the other side of the bed where Kara was still sleeping with the cat curled up in a ball on her hip. “Mama?” Lizzy said, patting her cheek. “Mama, up! Br’fast!”
There was no response, and Lena frowned. “Kara?”

Lizzy scowled. “Mama, UP!” She demanded, making a fist and punching Kara in the shoulder.

There was a crackle and a little shower of sparks, the cat jumped to the floor with a growl and Kara winced, nose wrinkling in that adorably sleepy sulk that always made Lena’s heart melt. “Ow…” She grumbled, rubbing at her shoulder and blinking her eyes open. “No more lessons with Aunt Alex; that actually hurt!”

“Hi Mama,” Lizzy said, a wide grin spreading across her face.

“How?” Kara replied automatically, her eyes widening comically as soon as the words were out of her mouth. She shot up into a sitting position, nearly knocking all of them off the bed. “Lizzy? You... how...? If you’re here... how am I still alive?”

“I have no idea— Wait...” Lena processed the unexpected pronoun. “Why wouldn’t you be alive?” she demanded, crossing her arms. “Kara Zor-El-Luthor-Danvers, what did you do?!”

“I...um...” Kara stammered, twisting the bed sheets between her fingers.

“Kara!” Alex burst into the room, looking both terrified and furious. “What the hell is this?!” She threw a folded note at her before picking up a pillow from the bed and whacking her over the head with it. “Mom is going to kill you!”

“You weren’t even going to say goodbye?” Winn added, barrelling in after Alex, arms waving wildly.

“You wouldn’t have let me do it!” Kara protested, fending off the pillow attack.

“You’re right about that much.” J’onn shouldered in past Winn with Eliza right behind him. “What were you thinking?”

Eliza looked ready to cry. “How could you, Kara...? Didn’t we deserve even the courtesy of a chance to talk you out of it?”

“I’m sorry,” Lena cut in. “Talk her out of what, exactly? I seem to be the only person in this room who doesn’t know what’s going on here.”

“You didn’t even tell Lena?” Winn’s eyes were huge. “Oh you are SO dead.”

Lena raised a brow, fixing Kara with her best well? Out with it, look.

“I uh...” Kara looked around. “Any chance we could get a little privacy, guys?”

“No,” Alex said flatly. “I’m not done being mad at you yet, and I want to hear this.”

Kara sighed, toying with the ends of her sleeves. “Okay, so I might have asked Mxy to take my life and give it to Lizzy...”

Of course she had... And of course this had been too good to be true. Lena took a shaky breath. “How long do you have?” she asked, fighting to keep her voice even and steady while the sudden lump in her throat tried to decide whether it was made up more of grief or fury.

“That’s the thing...” Kara looked confused. “It should already have happened. “I mean, Lizzy is obviously alive, and I’m alive, which shouldn’t be possible...”
“Funny thing...” Mxy appeared with a snap of his fingers, startling Winn so badly he nearly fell over, stumbling sideways into Alex and stepping on the cat’s tail, who yowled and took a swipe at him before darting under the bed. “It turns out that ‘life’ is relative, and Kryptonians have rather a lot of it on this planet. You can split it into two, or three, or even four and still have enough for everyone.”

“Wait...” Kara was aghast. “You knew I wouldn’t die? You... you... jerk!”

Lena was inclined to agree.

Mxy held up his hands, taking a hasty step back. “To be fair, I wasn’t entirely sure, and you had to be willing to give up all of it, or it wouldn’t have worked. You did technically die, for about thirty seconds, while this little one and I,” he winked at Lizzy, who grinned back at him, “had a chat and worked out the details. She’s rather fond of you two, you know.”

“So I’m... what? Human now?” Kara asked wonderingly.

“Not at all, you’re still you. You still have all your powers, though you may need to take it easy and recharge those for a few days, but... provided you don’t get yourself killed protecting the planet from something that can hit harder than you, you’ll live a typical human lifespan. I assumed you wouldn’t mind growing old with your wife...?” A smile tugged at the corner of his lips.

Kara shook her head, naked gratitude shining in her eyes. “Thank you. And Lizzy?”

“Just a normal little girl. Well, relatively normal...” He corrected himself. “She’s still half imp, half kryptonian and half human, so things might get interesting when she gets a little older.”

“That’s one too many halves,” Winn protested. “She can’t be half of three things... can she?”

“The imp half isn’t exactly physical,” Mxy explained, “and as I understand it, toddlers aren’t generally very good at math. I wasn’t going to argue the point with her, but you’re free to try.”

“Uh no, I’m good.”

“So everything worked out then?! Kara’s smile was both penitent and sweetly hopeful, as if she knew exactly how badly she’d screwed up, but was still hoping to charm her way out of a lecture.

Lena knew she should be mad... she was mad. How dare Kara try to sacrifice herself without even talking to her first! But it was nearly impossible to hold on to that when she had Lizzy alive and safe and theirs forever now, and Kara too. She didn’t want to be mad. She wanted to be happy; impossibly, unbelievably happy.

But first...

“New family rule,” she said, fixing them both with a stern glare. “Absolutely no more dying for each other, understood? No,” she added when Kara opened her mouth to protest. “I’m not negotiating here. “You, and you,” she pointed to each of them in turn, “are both self-sacrificing idiots, and I’m not having it. Agreed?”

Kara looked at Lizzy. Lizzy looked at Kara, and Kara nodded. “We can live with that.”

“Good. Now get over here...” Lena tangled her fingers in Kara’s shirt and dragged her into a hug. It was all over. They had won, and this family was hers. The tears she hadn’t been able to shed until now suddenly spilled over in a flood, Kara’s arms came up around her and held her tight and Lena buried her face in her shoulder and sobbed.
“And that’s our cue to leave...” Alex said, ushering everyone else out.

“Wait...” Winn said to Mxy. “I know it’s not all strictly mathematical, but you said Kara had enough life for three or four people... if she and Lizzy are both going to live normal lives, where did all that extra time go? What? I’m just asking!” he added when Alex rolled her eyes at him.

“Oh...” Mxy ducked his head, rubbing the back of his neck awkwardly. “That was supposed to be a surprise.”

“I think I’ve had enough surprises for one day,” Lena said, turning around in Kara’s arms and wiping her eyes. “I want to hear this.”

“Me too,” Kara agreed, resting her chin on Lena’s shoulder. “What did you do?”

“Oh it wasn’t me,” he said. “That was one of those details I was telling you about, or two of them I should probably say.”

“Two what?” Lena asked suspiciously.

Mxy didn’t answer her, he just gestured to Lizzy with a flourish. She reached over to touch the tips of her fingers to Lena’s belly, looking up at her with a grin. “Izzy, wish!”

“Excuse me...” Lena felt Kara’s jaw drop against her shoulder. “Are you telling me I’m pregnant?”

“We’re going to have another baby?” Kara sounded delighted. Damn her.

“Two,” Lena pointed out. “He said two details... So unless we’re both knocked up, it’s twins.”

“Oh my god...” Alex hurriedly covered her mouth, but her eyes were dancing.

“Now that really is our cue to leave,” Eliza said, waving everyone out the door. “Girls? Would you like me to take Lizzy to find something to eat while you talk?”

“Yes please.” Kara moved away from her, sliding off the bed to pick Lizzy up and hand her to Eliza.

“Mommy, mad?” Lizzy asked, lower lip sticking out in a pout.

“Mommy’s not mad,” Kara assured her.

Lena kept her own council on that point.

“I’d better be on my way as well,” Mxy said. “No need for trickery this time, Ms. Zor El. I’ll see myself out of your dimension, but I’ll be back here and there.” He winked. “I’ve always wanted to be the fun uncle.” With a snap he was gone, and they were alone.

“You’re not really mad, are you?” Kara asked, sitting back down on the bed across from her.

Lena pressed a hand to her belly, trying to wrap her head around the idea that there was life in there. Kara’s life, mingled with hers to create two new little lives. Alien lives.

“I don’t know,” she said honestly. “This... is a little unexpected.”

“But good, right? I mean, all of this was pretty unexpected. You, me and Lizzy... unexpected has worked out okay for us so far...” Kara trailed off, looking down and picking at the sheets. “I mean, if you really don’t want them—” she added in a small voice.
“I do want them...” Lena cut her off before she could finish that thought, surprised at the vehemence in her own voice. She was mad, of course she was mad. Who wouldn’t be? But she was also just a little bit relieved to have the decision taken out of her hands. Growing up, she’d always wanted a big family, but after Lex... she’d been determined not to add to the Luthor’s twisted dynasty. She still wasn’t completely sure about that, but if these children were also Els, and Danvers... maybe Lizzy was on to something with her three halves idea.

“I might have liked a little more warning,” she added wryly, “and maybe a few years to get used to the idea, but they’re in there now, so I hope you’re prepared for this, Supergirl. I do not suffer gracefully. There will be foot rubs and back rubs, multiple trips to the grocery store at two in the morning and you had better tell your sister you’ll be taking at least a month off after they’re born. I’m not having my wife flying around chasing criminals while I’m at home with two infants and a toddler. Don’t you smile at me! This is all your fault.”


“Excuse me?”

Kara’s grin softened. “Come here,” she said, shifting to lean back against the stiff plastic headboard, these beds were not designed for comfort, and tugging Lena into place against her side. She wrapped an arm around her waist and Lena grudgingly snuggled closer. “Mxy did wish for my happiness,” she admitted once they were in place, “but Lizzy told me that when she showed up to ask what I wanted— in my sleep by the way, which is why we didn’t remember any of this - I sent her to you instead.”

“You what?” Lena half-pushed herself up, only to relax back into Kara with a shake of her head. “Nevermind, that’s exactly what you would do. But why send her to me?”

Kara shrugged. “You needed her more, and I don’t think I had any clue what I really wanted.”

Lena let that sink in. Mxy had wished for Kara’s happiness, and Kara had wished for hers. “What did I wish for?”

“Family,” Kara said.

“I see.” Lena couldn’t help the sudden tension in her shoulders or the way she leaned slightly away from Kara. It wasn’t a big deal, it didn’t matter...except that it was, and it did. “So I did this... You must have apologized a dozen times in that first week, and all along—”

“Oh, no...” Kara said with a chuckle, refusing to be dragged down into Lena’s inevitable martyrdom. Her arm tightened around Lena and pulled her closer again. “We’re not doing that. Not today.” Lena resisted for all of a few seconds before giving in and Kara turned towards her, cupping her face between her hands and tilting her chin up so she could meet her eyes.

“I’m not in love with you because of a wish,” she said softly. “I’m in love with you because you’re you. And Lizzy didn’t have to turn herself into a little girl. She did that because you saw her for what she really was, and offered her a home and a family who would love her and take care of her. She chose to be ours, just like you chose us, and I chose the two of you and, “she added, dropping one of her hands to Lena’s belly, “you better believe we all chose these two, because I don’t think they would be in there if we hadn’t wanted them.

“What I’m trying to say is, all of this? Wasn’t something that was done to us. You were right before when you called it a gift. An amazing, unbelievable gift and I wouldn’t give it back for anything.”
“You’re sure?” Lena couldn’t help but ask, raising her hands to tangle in Kara’s hair. It seemed too good to be true... that this journey of theirs had been less about learning to love the life they’d been stuck with and more about accepting that this was the life they’d both wanted all along.

“I’m sure,” Kara said, kissing her softly before pressing their foreheads together. “I love you, and I love our daughter and I already love these babies, and I will be happy to wait on you hand and foot for all nine months if you like. You can stay in bed, and I’ll bring you anything you want. I’ll even cook... though that might not be very helpful. We could get a chef...”

Lena laughed, laying her hand over Kara’s. “I love you too and I love our family, though I can’t promise there won’t be a few more bumps in the road. I’m still not very good at this happiness thing.”

“But you’ll stop thinking you don’t deserve it?” Kara asked, sitting back.

“Hmm, well let’s see...” Lena wound her arms around Kara’s neck. “I made a wish, went on a quest, faced my fears and slew a giant.” She shifted closer, throwing a leg over her thighs and settling into her lap. “I even had a magic sword for a few minutes.”

“I saw that,” Kara said with a grin, resting her hands on Lena’s hips.

“I think all of that makes me a hero, don’t you?” Lena asked, waiting for Kara’s nod before she leaned forward and whispered into her ear, “and I’m sure we can both agree that heroes deserve a happy ending and they always, always get the girl...”

“I like the sound of that,” Kara agreed, sighing when Lena pressed a kiss to the side of her throat, threading her fingers into Lena’s hair. “Lena?”

“Hmm?”

“How long do you think we have before someone comes to check on us?”

“Oh at least half an hour,” Lena assured her. “What did you have in mind?”

“I have a few ideas.” She said, tipping Lena’s head back to claim her mouth in a brief, searing kiss. “Want to hear them?”

“How about you just show me?”

“I can do that.”

Chapter End Notes

So, good reasons? :D

The last chapter is an epilogue of sorts, so if there's anything you're dying to see from this family, I don't have it completely nailed down yet... so let me know! ;)
Coming to the End

Chapter Summary

Lena deals with being pregnant, Kara deals with Lena being pregnant, Lizzy has a new trick and they all lived happily ever after.

Chapter Notes

Here it is!

Finally, the last chapter! :D

I've made quite a few edits to the first 27 chapters over the last three weeks, mostly polishing up the prose, but there are a few extended scenes and a couple new ones. Nothing major, so you don't have to go back and re-read unless you want to :) though there is a bit of added conversation in chapter 27 between Lena and Kara about Lizzy's origins.

I hope you've all had as much fun with this story as I have, and I hope you enjoy this conclusion! :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was a morning like any other. Birds were singing, the first tentative beams of sunlight were darting in through their window and dancing across the bed and the bakery down the street was just pulling a tray of cinnamon rolls out of the oven. The sweet, sugary smell tickled Kara’s nose and she stretched and yawned, snuggling deeper into her nest of pillows until the harsh sound of retching from the bathroom brought her fully awake.

Yep.

Just another morning.

She fumbled for her phone on the nightstand, switching off the alarm and swinging her legs out of bed. She knocked on the bathroom door, knowing better by now than to go in without permission. “Lena? Are you okay?”

“Go away...” was the miserable reply, followed by another round of retching and Kara winced, leaving her to it.

She threw on a robe over her pyjamas and went to the kitchen to put the kettle on. Once Lena was finished throwing up she would want her peppermint tea and a single piece of dry toast before she went to the office. Kara kept one ear tuned to the bedroom so she would know when to start the toast and got Lena’s favourite mug down from the cupboard, measuring out just the right amount of tea and scooping it into the little silver shark strainer she’d given Lena as a joke to make her smile when they’d first realized the morning sickness was going to be a thing.
Morning sickness, afternoon sickness and even *evening* sickness some days...

They were two and a half months along now, and everyone was crossing their fingers that this was going to be confined to the first trimester because Lena puking her guts out three times a day was not going well for *anyone*. Jess had even threatened to go on vacation until the twins were born. Kara had managed to talk her out of it, mostly by promising to fly out and bring her right back again if she tried. Kara wasn’t sure if it was the thought of the wasted air fare, or the possible indignity of being thrown over Supergirl’s shoulder that convinced her, but either way, Jess was still here.

Lizzy staggered into the kitchen yawning and rubbing her eyes just as the kettle boiled. Her dark curls were in a ridiculous tangle, and one chubby cheek was creased from her sheets. She had the left cuff of her pyjama pants rucked up around her knee and the right flapping over her toes, and her belly was sticking out under her shirt. They’d finally caved and bought her a real bed for her birthday after she started teleporting out of her crib a month ago. The proviso being that she wasn’t allowed to get up until one or both of her moms did and so far it seemed to be working.

“Morning, kiddo!” Kara swept her up with a grin and blew a raspberry kiss against her round little belly. Lizzy shrieked and giggled.

“Mama, stop!” She squirmed and kicked, laughing helplessly when Kara started tickling her instead.

There was a sudden *pop* of displaced air and Lizzy was gone, reappearing perched on the back of the couch with a Cheshire grin and impish *you can’t catch me...* look in her eyes.

“Oh it’s *on...*” Kara darted after her in a blur and Lizzy blinked in and out of view, both of them being *very* careful not to break anything as they chased each other around the living room. Lena was *not* to be trifled with when it came to the decor. Kara finally *won* by throwing her robe over Lizzy before she could teleport again, wrapping it around her like a sack and picking it up with a cheerful “Got you!”

Lizzy roared and thrashed around wildly, but she was thoroughly stuck this time. She had to be able to see her destination in order to jump through space. A limitation they were *all* very grateful for.

Kara dumped her out on the kitchen floor, stepping over her to reach the fridge. “Breakfast time!”

Lizzy grumbled, surly in her defeat, but she climbed up into her booster seat and downed her milk in a single gulp. “More, p’ease?” she said, holding the cup out. Kara exchanged it for a bowl of cereal, refilling the cup and giving it back to her. Lizzy thanked her through a mouthful of cheerios, milk dribbling down her chin.

Kara sighed, but gave her a pass for effort. She popped the toast down when she heard the door to the bathroom open and poured the water for Lena’s tea. While she waited for it to steep she got a can of cat food out of the cupboard, pulling the lid off and dumping it into a bowl. “Cookah!” she called, “breakfast!”

The tiger poked his giant head out of Lizzy’s room and padded down the hall, sniffing the air excitedly. He half rose on his hind legs, trying to shove his face into the bowl in her hand, and she fended him off with the other. “Hey, you know the rules big guy...”

He settled back on his haunches and gave her his most baleful look, but she shook her head. “Come on...”

With a resigned sigh he dropped his front feet back to the floor and shook himself, shrinking down, down and down, losing the black stripes and overall tigerish-ness until he was just a house cat, long tail held up in a perfectly self satisfied question mark. He mewed plaintively and Kara set his dish
down on the floor and stroked his back. “Good boy.”

“Cookah get small...” Lizzy said sadly.

“Cookah is living in an apartment,” Lena reminded her, joining them in the kitchen and taking the cup of tea Kara handed her with a grateful smile. “He’s welcome to go back to the Zoo if he doesn’t like the rules,” she added, stepping right into Kara’s arms, wrapping her free arm around her waist and resting her head on her shoulder. She was paler than usual today, the bright red of her lipstick starker than ever against her white skin and she felt fragile under Kara’s hands. The slight swell of her belly was barely noticeable at this stage, but Kara couldn’t resist running her fingers over it anyway, automatically tuning in to the two little fluttering heartbeats that were causing all this trouble.

“Rough morning?” she asked with a kiss to Lena’s temple.

“Aren’t they all?”

“It’ll get better soon...”

“Promise?” Lena asked, tipping her head back for a proper kiss. Kara was only too happy to oblige.

“If it doesn’t,” she said, licking the taste of cinnamon toothpaste off her lips. “I’ll ask Alex to quit chasing aliens and focus on inventing something better for morning sickness. Are you sure you’re going to be up for this evening?”

Lena nodded. “I’ll make it. How are the parasites?”

Kara winced. “Do you have to call them that?”

“Would you prefer alien hell-spawn? That’s my favourite right now.”

“Can’t we just call them babies?”

“When you’re the one throwing up everything down to your toenails for the sixty-third day in a row, you can call them whatever you want. Until then, parasites is the best I can do.”

“What if they can hear you?”

“They don’t even have ears yet. I looked it up. Believe me; I intend to get much more specific with my threats of revenge if this keeps up past eighteen weeks.”

“Well, our children are doing just fine this morning,” Kara said pointedly, detangling herself when the toast popped and getting a plate down from the cupboard. “Hungry?”

Lena wrinkled her nose. “No, but I should eat.” She sipped her tea while Kara got her breakfast ready, accepting the plate with a quick kiss to her lower lip. “Don’t pout. I promise I will still love them even if I throw up for another six and a half months, but for now I reserve the right to be slightly petty about it.”

“That’s fair I suppose,” Kara allowed, tugging her back in for another lingering kiss, this one tasting of peppermint instead of cinnamon. Puking aside, she loved these slow lazy mornings. Lena insisted she would be working throughout her pregnancy, but she’d agreed, under the threat of mutiny from all hands, to start at nine instead of eight and Kara had cleared the shift with Snapper as well so barring super emergencies, they could have this little slice of time together every day. “Do you want me to pick you up?”
“No,” Lena took her toast to the table, sitting down beside Lizzy and tsking at the state of her curls. Lizzy battered at her hands when she tried to instill a little order until Lena raised an eloquent eyebrow and she surrendered with a sigh. “I don’t think flying is such a good idea right now. I can meet you there.”

“That’s probably for the best.” Kara agreed. “Come on you,” she said to Lizzy, picking her up out of her booster seat. “Let’s get you ready for daycare.”

Lizzy loved daycare. It had taken most of the first month after the events at the DEO for Kara and Lena to be ready to even think about leaving her with anyone other than family, but while Eliza was wonderful, she couldn’t put her life on hold indefinitely. She had accepted the consultant position at Lcorp, and she was looking at apartments in National city, but until she was settled, and even after, they didn’t want to ask too much of her and Lizzy needed to be with kids her own age.

Faye, the director at Little Tots, had been startled when Supergirl had shown up on her doorstep with an application and a non-disclosure agreement, but to her credit she’d taken it all in stride. Lena had done her background check and Kara had persuaded J’onn to do an undercover mind sweep ahead of time, so they were as sure as they could be of her character and so far she had only proved them right. Lizzy adored her, and the three toddler teachers were quickly earning a place in her heart as well. In true Luthor fashion, she had a loyal band of tiny minions among her classmates already, and if she had mentioned her pet tiger once or twice, well lots of kids had imaginary friends.

They were ready to go by eight thirty; Lizzy with her little backpack and her new sparkly light-up sneakers that had almost resigned her to the idea of footwear. She had to hug Cookah goodbye, lifting him up around the ribs for an enthusiastic squeeze that he accepted with good grace for a tiger pretending to be a housecat. Lena got a hug and a kiss from both of them, Lizzy patting her Mommy’s belly once she was back on the floor and saying a cheerful goodbye to the twins as well.

They didn’t take the bus anymore. Since the Gala and the subsequent founding of the National City LGBTQ+ Youth center, Lena had become something of a minor celebrity and Queer Icon. There had been a flurry of articles, interviews and television spots and while Kara had mostly escaped unscathed, the city was eager to be delighted by pictures of Lena’s wife and daughter out and about. Kara didn’t mind exactly, but she had a secret identity to protect, and she preferred not to be trapped in a slow moving vehicle with well meaning fans when she didn’t have to be. The first time she was ambushed by cameras on the bus Kara had waved it off. After the second time, Lena bought her a car and Alex had assigned a set of agents to rotate as her driver. Kara still preferred to walk when she could, or fly, but it was getting harder and harder to sneak into alleyways, and with so many eyes on them she couldn’t risk flying with Lizzy. She was pretty sure it was only going to get worse when the twins were born, but they’d already had that talk and agreed that fame was a small price to pay for their life together.

The car dropped them off at the daycare and Kara hustled Lizzy inside, waiting patiently while she hung up her sweater and her backpack in her cubby and changed her shoes, carefully lining up the sneakers side-by-side with the toes touching the wall. Lizzy, they had discovered, might be willing to leave her bedroom looking like a warzone if Lena had let her, but she took her scholastic responsibilities very seriously.

She hugged Kara’s knees at the door to her classroom before running off to find her friends with a wave and a cheerful, “bye, Mama!”

“Bye, kiddo!”

“Good morning, Kara.” One of the teachers brought the sign-in sheet over for her to initial. “How is Lena doing this morning?”
Kara made a face.

“That good?” She chuckled. “Let her know we’re all thinking of her.”

“I will.” Kara handed the clipboard back. “Oh, and Eliza will be picking up tonight.”

“No problem, I’ll make a note for the late staff.”

“Thanks, Melanie.”

The next stop was Catco. Kara’s piece on Human and Alien relations had been so popular that Snapper, with James’ support, had decided to make it a regular column, which was amazing because it meant she would be able to work from home a lot more after the twins were born, and she was writing about things that really mattered to her, rather than relying on her alter ego all the time. Snapper had assigned this new kid who was supposed to be some kind of writing prodigy to all the Supergirl stories and he was in awe of her, which both James and Alex found hilarious. Kara had taken pity on him and tried to wait around after her best saves to give him a quote and a few pictures, but he was such a disaster that she was still mostly conducting her own interviews while he frantically tried to scribble it all down.

“Danvers!” Snapper ambushed her at her desk after lunch, florid and scowling as usual. “Where are you on the integration of alien kids into the school system?”

“Oh...” Kara resisted the urge to tell him about Lizzy’s recent foray into classroom domination. She was, at least, a peaceful dictator. The teachers claimed conflicts between the children had gone way down since she started. “I have interviews set up for tomorrow with the principals from the three pilot schools.”

“Good. Make sure you talk to some of the teachers too. I don’t want the officially sugar-coated version. I want the facts. Get a few quotes from the kids if you can get any of their parents to sign a release.”

“Yes, boss.”

Snapper grumbled an approval. “And how’s that Luthor woman doing?” he added, almost grudgingly. Lena had been slowly winning him over on her visits to Catco. He still wouldn’t admit to actually liking her, but he’d stopped calling her crazy, and he’d been surprisingly supportive over the last two months.

“The same,” Kara said. “But she says those ginger candies you recommended have been helping a little in the afternoons.”

“Good, good...” Snapper rubbed a hand over the top of his head and shuffled off with a final “Don’t forget to copy me on those interviews tomorrow, Danvers!”

“Sure thing,” Kara agreed absently, already distracted by the sound of sirens in the distance. So much for getting any work done today...

She took off from the roof, cape snapping in the breeze. It was a straight forward car chase. She zoomed down over the highway towards the flashing lights, grinning at the clicking of cell phone cameras and exclamations of excitement as she passed. Matching speeds with the suspect’s car she dug her hands into the roof, twisting the metal into a pair of handholds and picked it up. She called Maggie over the comms and there was a welcoming committee ready and waiting at the police station when she got there, lowering the car just enough so that they could haul the suspect out and cuff him before she set it down and launched herself back into the sky.
She had just enough time to get back to work and finish up before running a few errands and stopping at the apartment on her way to meet Lena. This is why she had DEO agents for drivers. It would be awkward to have to explain to a civilian why she almost never seemed to need a return trip.

The construction crew was just finishing up for the day when she got there, landing neatly in an enormously overgrown backyard. She heard Lena’s voice from inside the old house, something about wainscoting and panelling.

“Hey, Kara!” The foreman waved to her on his way out the door, blueprints under his arm.

“Hi Frank, how’s it going?” Kara asked.

“Back on schedule,” he said with a rueful shake of his head. “You’ve got quite the task master there. I thought I was demanding, but she gets the best out of us, that’s for sure.” He patted the railing of the wraparound porch fondly. “It’s good to see this old girl getting back on her feet. She’s going to be beautiful again soon.”

Kara joined Lena inside where the architect in charge of the restoration was giving her a tour of the repairs that had already been completed and filling her in on the next steps. It was already looking better than the last time they had been there.

It was an old Queen Anne; a Victorian-era masterpiece built in the mid 1880’s and left to rot for the last twenty years. Three stories of yellow brick with beautiful variegated detailing and a uniquely charming silhouette; it looked like an enchanted house from a storybook. Kara had fallen in love with it instantly when she and Lena had first started looking. Lena had taken a little more convincing, she was leaning towards something modern, but she hadn’t been able to resist Kara’s enthusiasm, and it helped that it was the exact opposite of anything Lillian would have considered. Even in disrepair it was warm and welcoming; a mischievously charming old grandmother of a house.

Kara wrapped an arm around Lena’s waist and kissed her cheek in greeting. “How are you feeling?” she asked softly.

“Better,” Lena said, leaning into her. “Did you have any trouble getting away?”

“Nope. I had one car chase, but other than that it’s been quiet.”

They followed the architect upstairs to see the bedrooms and the master bath. Kara took Lena’s hand, unable to contain her grin as she bounced excitedly through the tour.

This was going to be their home.

They were converting the room beside the master suite into a nursery and adding a door between them. Kara’s studio was going to be on the third floor with a skylight and huge bay window and bookshelves and a reading nook if Lena wanted to keep her company while she painted. The rest of the third floor was going to be a giant playroom for the kids. Lena’s office was on the first floor, along with the open concept kitchen, dining and living room, and a little suite for Eliza. They’d invited her to stay with them for a few months after the twins were born, both Eliza and Lena tearing up when she’d accepted.

They bid the architect good night when they came back downstairs, standing together on the porch as he drove away and left them alone in their half-finished house.

“What do you think?” Kara asked.

“I love it,” Kara said dreamily, running her fingers down one of the hand-turned posts that supported the roof over the porch. “There’s so much history here, and I think it likes us.”

Lena shook her head. “It’s a house.”

“It’s a home,” Kara countered, turning to lean back against the rail. “Our home.”

“Hmm...” Lena stepped into her, hooking her fingers through Kara’s belt loops and smirking her slow, sneaky smirk. “I like the sound of that.”

“I thought you might,” Kara murmured, ducking her head for a kiss. She pulled Lena in by her hips, un-tucking her blouse from the hem of her skirt and earning herself a little noise of approval when she found warm skin under her fingers. Lena pushed up on her toes, deepening the kiss and raising one hand to tangle in the curls at the nape of Kara’s neck.

“Dinner?” She asked when they finally came up for air. “I’m actually hungry for once, so I hope you remembered...”

“Of course.” Kara chased her mouth for one last kiss before letting her go. “I brought everything over on my lunch break.”

The kitchen was still a disaster, but they did have a working fridge. First though, she got the blankets and pillows she’d stashed in the closet, spreading them out in the middle of the empty dining room so they could have a cozy little picnic. She had candles too, and she set them up around the room in a blur of brass and firelight. Lena squeaked when she scooped her up and carried her to their nest, laying her down gently in the pillows before stealing her pointed black heels and running her fingers teasingly up the soles of her bare feet.

“Dinner...” Lena reminded her, tugging her foot away, though her cheeks were flushed and Kara could hear the uptick in her heartbeat. “This is going to be an unfortunately short evening if I don’t get something in my stomach very soon. Not,” she added with a suggestive tilt to her brow, “that I’m generally opposed to starting with dessert.”

“Sorry,” Kara flushed. She had prepared the picnic with Lena in mind; sliced fruit and veggies, crackers and fresh bread, cold chicken and mild cheese. She brought everything out on a tray, setting it down in the middle of the blankets along with bottles of water and a stack of napkins. “Is this okay?” she asked, sitting next to Lena once everything was set up.

“This is lovely.” Lena leaned over for a quick kiss. “Thank you, darling.”

The sun was setting while they ate, sinking slowly below the horizon until the only light was the soft yellow glow of the candles, and Kara was struck all over again by how beautiful Lena was. Her awe must have been plain on her face, because Lena gave her a look from under her lashes that suggested she knew exactly how devastating she was, slipping a slice of strawberry past her lips and into her mouth with a wink.

Kara gulped.

Taking another strawberry from the plate Lena leaned over and tapped it against Kara’s lips with a daring light in her eyes. Heart pounding, Kara opened her mouth and let Lena feed it to her, swallowing as she dragged her fingers over her lower lip and down her chin.

“More?” Lena asked huskily.
Kara nodded, and Lena picked up the plate and settled into her lap, one knee to either side of Kara’s hips, setting the plate down beside them. She fed Kara the rest of the strawberries and the raspberries, stealing kisses between pieces of fruit that grew steadily more heated until they were both breathing quickly, and she was rocking slowly in Kara’s lap.

“Well,” she whispered against her jaw, the tips of her fingers wet on Kara’s lips. “I suppose this is one way to get you to eat a more balanced diet, though I’m not sure it’s practical for every day.”

Kara laughed shakily, pressing a clumsy kiss to Lena’s fingers. “We could try it...” she suggested, sliding her hand from Lena’s hip to the small of her back and urging her on. “I’m always up for a challenge.”

Lena moaned, burying her face in Kara’s shoulder and clutching the back of her neck. Kara switched her attention to Lena’s blouse, quickly undoing all the little black buttons and pushing it down over her arms. Her bra was next, and Kara unfastened it with the ease of months of practice, eager to get her hands on Lena’s breasts for the first time in over a week. Between Lena being ill and Kara scrambling to take over as much of the parenting and household chores as possible as well as balancing catco and Supergirl, they hadn’t had many chances for intimacy, and Kara had missed this.

Hooking an arm around Lena’s waist, she tumbled them both back into a pile of pillows, catching her mouth in a demanding kiss while she fumbled at the zipper on her skirt, and Lena unbuckled her belt, tugging at the buttons on her pants and pushing them down her hips.

In minutes they were both stripped bare and they made love in the candlelight, in the home they were building for their family.

Together.

Forever.

Chapter End Notes

There you have it!

I know, there are a a few unanswered questions and things we didn't see, but I'm hoping to add to this series with one-shots in the future, and I had to have something left to tell. ;)

Thank you to everyone who stuck with me this long, and I hope to see you all on my next story!

End Notes

You can also find me at blackteaandbones.tumblr.com
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!